

THE "CHANDOS CLASSICS."

MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE
OR
SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

By J. G. LOCKHART.

A New Edition in Two Volumes.
CONDENSED AND REVISED

By the Editor of "The Chandos Classics"

VOL. II.



LONDON AND NEW YORK:
FREDERICK WARNE AND CO.
1890.

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MEMOIRS

OF THE

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

CHAPTER XVI

ILLNESS OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH—SCOTT ACCEPTS A BARONETCY—
SCOTT'S ILLNESS—DEATH OF THE DUKE OF BUCCLEUCH

I HAVE now to introduce a melancholy subject—one of the greatest afflictions that Scott ever encountered. The health of Charles Duke of Buccleuch was by this time beginning to give way, and Scott thought it his duty to intimate his very serious apprehensions to his noble friend's brother.

To the Right Hon. Lord Montagu, Dutton Park, Windsor

“Edinburgh, 12th Nov, 1818

“MY DEAR LORD,—

“I am about to write to you with feelings of the deepest anxiety. I have hesitated for two or three days whether I should communicate to your lordship the sincere alarm which I entertain on account of the Duke's present state of health, but I have come to persuade myself, that it will be discharging part of the duty which I owe to him to mention my own most distressing apprehensions. I was at the cattle-show on the 6th, and executed the delegated task of toastmaster, and so forth. I was told by * * * that the Duke is under the influence of the muriatic bath, which occasions a good deal of uneasiness when the medicine is in possession of the system. The Duke observes the strictest diet, and remained only a short time at table, leaving me to do the honours, which I did with a sorrowful heart, endeavouring, however, to persuade myself that * * *s account, and the natural depression of spirits incidental to his finding himself unable for the time to discharge the duty to his guests, which no man can do with so much grace and kindness, were sufficient to account for the alteration of his manner and appearance. I spent Monday with him quietly and alone, and I must say that all I saw and heard was calculated to give me the greatest pain. His strength is much less, his spirits lower, and his general appearance far more unfavourable than when I left him at Drumlanrig a few weeks before. What * * *, and, indeed, what the Duke himself says of the medicine, may be true—but * * * is very sanguine, and, like all the personal physicians attached to a person of such consequence, he is too much addicted to the *placebo*—at least I think so—too apt to fear to give offence by contradiction, or by telling that sort of truth which may controvert the wishes or habits of his patient. I feel I am communicating much pain to your lordship, but I am sure that, excepting yourself,

there is not a man in the world whose sorrow and apprehension could exceed mine in having such a task to discharge, for, as your lordship well knows, the ties which bind me to your excellent brother are of a much stronger kind than usually connect persons so different in rank. But the alteration in voice and person, in features, and in spirits, all argue the decay of natural strength, and the increase of some internal disorder, which is gradually triumphing over the system. Much has been done in these cases by change of climate. I hinted this to the Duke at Dinmlanng, but I found his mind totally averse to it. But he made some inquiries at Harden (just returned from Italy), which seemed to imply that at least the idea of a winter in Italy or the south of France was not altogether out of his consideration. Your lordship will consider whether he can or ought to be pressed upon this point. He is partial to Scotland, and feels the many high duties which bind him to it. But the air of this country, with its alternations of moisture and dry frost, although excellent for a healthy person, is very trying to a valetudinarian.

"I should not have thought of volunteering to communicate such unpleasant news, but that the family do not seem alarmed. I am not surprised at this, because, where the decay of health is very gradual, it is more easily traced by a friend who sees the patient from interval to interval, than by the affectionate eyes which are daily beholding him.

"Adieu, my dear lord. God knows you will scarce read this letter with more pain than I feel in writing it. But it seems indispensable to me to communicate my sentiments of the Duke's present situation to his nearest relation and dearest friend. His life is invaluable to his country and to his family, and how dear it is to his friends can only be estimated by those who know the soundness of his understanding, the uprightness and truth of his judgment, and the generosity and warmth of his feelings. I am always, my dear lord, most truly yours, "WALTER SCOTT"

Scott's letters of this and the two following months are very much occupied with the painful subject of the Duke of Buccleuch's health, but those addressed to his Grace himself are, in general, in a more jocose strain than usual. His friend's spirits were sinking, and he exerted himself in this way in the hope of amusing the hours of languor at Bowhill. These letters are headed "Edinburgh Gazette Extraordinary," No 1, No 2, and so on, but they deal so much in laughable gossip about persons still living, that I find it difficult to make any extracts from them.

The following paragraphs, from the "Gazette" of Nov 20th, give a little information as to his own minor literary labours —

"The article on 'Gourmand's Narrative' is by a certain *Vieux Routier* of your Grace's acquaintance, who would willingly have some military hints from you for the continuation of the article, if at any time you should feel yourself disposed to amuse yourself with looking at the General's marvellous performance. His lies are certainly like the father that begot them. Do not think that at any time the little trumpery intelligence this place affords can interrupt my labours while it amuses your Grace. I can scribble as fast in the Court of Sessions as

anywhere else, without the least loss of time or hindrance of business. At the same time, I cannot help laughing at the miscellaneous trash I have been putting out of my hand, and the various motives that made me undertake the job. An article for the *Edinburgh Review*,*—this for the love of Jeffrey, the editor—the first for ten years. Do, being the article *Drama* for the 'Encyclopædia'—this for the sake of Mr. Constable, the publisher. Do, for the *Blackwoodian Magazine*—this for the love of the cause I espoused. Do for the "Quarterly Review"†—this for the love of myself, I believe, or, which is the same thing, for the love of £100, which I wanted for some odd purpose. As all these folks fight like cat and dog among themselves, my situation is much like *suave mare magno*, and so forth.

"I hope you Grace will never think of answering the 'Gazettes' at all, or even replying to letters of business, until you find it quite convenient and easy. The 'Gazette' will continue to appear as materials occur."

Good Queen Charlotte died on the 17th of this month, and, in writing to Mr. Mountripp on the 21st, Scott thus expresses what was, I believe, the universal feeling at the moment—

"So we have lost the old Queen. She has only had the sad prerogative of being kept alive by nursing for some painful weeks, whereas perhaps a subject might have closed the scene earlier. I fear the effect of this event on public manners, and I believe that poor Charlotte really adopted her rules of etiquette upon a feeling of duty. If we should suppose the Princess of Wales to have been at the head of the matronage of the land for these last ten years, what would have been the difference on public opinion? No man of experience will ever expect the breath of a Court to be favourable to correct morals—*sed non caste caute tamen*. One half of the mischief is done by the publicity of the evil, which corrupts those which are near its influence, and fills with disgust and apprehension those to whom it does not directly extend. Honest old Evelyn's account of Charles II.'s Court presses on one's recollection, and prepares the mind for anxious apprehensions."

Towards the end of November, 1818, Scott received from his kind friend, Lord Sidmouth, then Secretary of State for the Home Department, the formal announcement of the Prince Regent's desire (which had been privately communicated some months earlier through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam) to confer on him the rank of Baronet. When Scott first heard of the Regent's gracious intention, he had signified considerable hesitation about the prudence of his accepting any such accession of rank, for it had not escaped his observation that such airy sounds, however modestly people may be disposed to estimate them, are apt to entail in the upshot additional cost upon their way of living, and to affect accordingly the plastic fancies, feelings and habits of their children. But Lord Sidmouth's letter happened to reach him a few days after he had heard of the sudden death of his wife's brother, Charles Carpenter, who had bequeathed the reversion of his fortune to his sister's family, and this circumstance disposed Scott to waive his scruples, chiefly

* "On Maturin's Women, or, Pom et Contie"

† Article on "Childe Harold," Canto 4

with a view to the professional advantage of his eldest son, who had by this time fixed on the life of a soldier. As is usually the case, the estimate of Mr Carpenter's property transmitted at the time to England proved to have been an exaggerated one, as nearly as my present information goes the amount was doubled. But as to the only question of my interest, to wit, how Scott himself felt on all these matters at the moment, the following letter to one whom he had long leaned to as a brother will be more satisfactory than anything else it is in my power to quote:—

To J. B. S. MORRITT, Esq, M P, Roxbury

“Edinburgh, 7th December, 1813.

“MY DEAR MORRITT,—

‘I know you are indifferent to nothing that concerns us, and therefore I take an early opportunity to acquaint you with the mixture of evil and good which has very lately befallen us. On Saturday last we had the advice of the death of my wife's brother, Charles Carpenter, Commercial Resident at Salem, in the Madras Establishment. This event has given her great distress. She has not, that we know of, a single blood relation left in the world, for her uncle, the Chevalier de la Volere, colonel of a Russian regiment, is believed to have been killed in the campaign of 1813. My wife has been very unwell for two days, and is only now sitting up and mixing with us. She has that sympathy which we are all bound to pay, but feels she wants that personal interest in her sorrow which could only be grounded on a personal acquaintance with the deceased.

“Mr Carpenter has, with great propriety, left his property in life-rent to his wife, the capital to my children. It seems to amount to about £40,000. Upwards of £30,000 is in the British funds, the rest to an uncertain value in India. I hope this prospect of independence will not make my children different from that which they have usually been—docile, dutiful and affectionate. I trust it will not. At least, the first expression of their feelings was honourable, for it was a unanimous wish to give up all to their mother. This I explained to them was out of the question; but that if they should be in possession at any time of this property, they ought, among them, to settle an income of £400 or £500 on their mother for her life, to supply her with a fund at her own uncontrolled disposal, for any indulgence or useful purpose that might be required. Mrs Scott will stand in no need of this; but it is a pity to let kind affections run to waste, and if they never have it in their power to pay such a debt, their willingness to have done so will be a pleasant reflection. I am Scotchman enough to hate the breaking up of family ties, and the too close adherence to personal property. For myself, this event makes me neither richer nor poorer *directly*, but indirectly it will permit me to do something for my poor brother Tom's family, besides pleasing myself in ‘*plantings*, and ‘*politics*, and ‘*biggings*,’* with a safe conscience.

“There is another thing I have to whisper to your faithful ear. Our

* I think this is a quotation from some old Scotch chronicler on the character of King James V.

fat-friend being desirous to honour literature in my unworthy person, has intimated to me by his organ the Doctor, that, with consent ample and unanimous of all the potential voices of all his Ministers, each more happy than another of course on so joyful an occasion, he proposes to dub me Baronet. It would be easy saying a parcel of fine things about my contempt of rank and so forth, but although I would not have gone a step out of my way to have asked, or bought, or begged, or borrowed a distinction, which to me personally will rather be inconvenient than otherwise, yet, coming as it does directly from the source of feudal honours, and as an honour, I am really gratified with it, especially as it is intimated that it is his Royal Highness's pleasure to heat the oven for me expressly, without waiting till he has some new batch of baronets ready in dough. In plain English, I am to be gazetted *per se*. My poor friend Carpenter's bequest to my family has taken away a certain degree of impecuniosity, a necessity of saving cheese-parings and candle-ends, which always looks inconsistent with any little pretension to rank. But as things now stand, advance banners in the name of God and Saint Andrew! Remember, I anticipate the jest, 'I like not such grinning honours as Sir Walter hath'* After all, if one must speak for themselves, I have my quarters and emblazonments, free of all stain but Border theft and high treason, which I hope are gentlemanlike crimes, and I hope Sir Walter Scott will not sound worse than Sir Humphry Davy, though my merits are as much under his, in point of utility, as can well be imagined. But a name is something, and mine is the better of the two. Set down this flourish to the account of national and provincial pride, for you must know we have more Messieurs de Sotenville † in our Border counties than anywhere else in the Lowlands, I cannot say for the Highlands. The Duke of Buccleuch, greatly to my joy, resolves to France for a season. Adam Ferguson goes with him to glad him by the way."

Before quitting the year 1818, I ought to have mentioned that among Scott's miscellaneous occupations in its autumn, he found time to contribute some curious materials toward a new edition of Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland, which had been undertaken by his old acquaintance, Mr Robert Jameson. During the winter session he appears to have made little progress with his novel, his painful seizures of cramp were again recurring frequently, and he probably thought it better to allow the story of Lammermoor to lie over until his health should be re-established. In the meantime he drew up a set of topographical and historical essays, which originally appeared in the successive numbers of the splendidly illustrated work, entitled Provincial Antiquities of Scotland ‡. But he did this merely to gratify his own love of the subject, and because, well or ill, he must be doing something. He declined all pecuniary recompense, but afterwards, when the success of the publication was secure, accepted from the proprietors some of the beautiful drawings by Turner, Thomson, and other artists, which had been prepared to accompany his text. These

* Sir Walter Blunt—I King Henry IV., Act V. Scene 3

† See Moliere's "George Dandin"

‡ These charming essays are now reprinted in his Miscellaneous Prose Works (edit 1834), vol vii

drawings are now in the little breakfast-room at Abbotsford—the same which had been constructed for his own den, and which I found him occupying as such in the spring of 1819

In the course of December, 1818, he also opened an important negotiation with Messrs Constable, which was completed early in the ensuing year. The cost of his building had, as is usual, exceeded his calculation, and he had both a large addition to it, and some new purchases of land in view. Moreover, his eldest son had now fixed on the cavalry, in which service every step infers very considerable expense. The details of this negotiation are remarkable. Scott considered himself as a very fortunate man when Constable, who at first offered £10,000 for all his then existing copyrights, agreed to give for them £12,000. Meeting a friend in the street, just after the deed had been executed, he said he wagered no man could guess at how large a price Constable had estimated his “eld kye” (cows barren from age). The copyrights thus transferred were, as specified in the instrument—

“The said Walter Scott, Esq. s present share, being the entire copyright,
of *Waverley*

Do	do	<i>Gay Mannering</i>	
Do	do	<i>Antiquary</i>	
Do	do.	<i>Rob Roy</i>	
Do	do	<i>Tales of my Landlord,</i>	1st series.
Do	do	do	2nd series
Do	do	do	3rd series.
Do	do	<i>Bridal of Triermain</i>	
Do	do	<i>Harold the Dauntless</i>	
Do	do	<i>Sir Tristrem</i>	
Do	do	<i>Roderick Collection</i>	
Do	do	<i>Paul's Letters</i>	
Do	being one-eighth of the <i>Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>		
Do	being one-half of the <i>Lady of the Lake</i>		
Do	being one-half of <i>Rokeby</i>		
Do	being one-half of the <i>Lord of the Isles</i> ”		

The instrument contained a clause binding Messrs. Constable never to divulge the name of the author of *Waverley* during his life under a penalty of £2,000

I may observe, that had these booksellers fulfilled their part of this agreement, by paying off prior to their insolvency in 1826 the whole bonds for £12,000, which they signed on the 2nd of February, 1819, no interest in the copyrights above specified could have been expected to revert to the author of *Waverley*, but more of this in due season

He alludes to the progress of the treaty in a letter to Captain Adam Ferguson, who had, as has already appeared, left Scotland with the Duke of Buccleuch. His Grace hearing, when in London, that one of the Barons of Exchequer at Edinburgh meant speedily to resign, the Captain had, by his desire, written to urge on Scott the propriety of renewing his application for a seat on that bench, which, however, Scott at once refused to do. There were several reasons for this abstinence, among others, he thought such a promotion at this time would interfere with a project which he had formed of joining “the Chief and the Aide-de-camp” in the course of the spring, and accomplishing in their society the tour of Portugal and Spain—perhaps of Italy also. Some such excursion had

been strongly recommended to him by his own physicians, as the likeliest means of interrupting those habits of sedulous exertion at the desk, which they all regarded as the true source of his recent ailments, and the only serious obstacle to his cure, and his standing as a Clerk of Session, considering how largely he had laboured in that capacity for infirm brethren, would have easily secured him a twelvemonth's leave of absence from the Judges of his Court. But the principal motive was his reluctance to interfere with the claims of the then Sheriff of Midlothian, his own and Ferguson's old friend and schoolfellow, Sir William Rae, who, however, accepted the more ambitious post of Lord Advocate in the course of the ensuing summer.

On the 15th of February, 1819, Scott witnessed the first representation on the Edinburgh boards of the most meritorious and successful of all the *Terry fictions*, though Terry himself was not the manufacturer. The drama of *Rob Roy* will never again be got up so well in all its parts as it then was by William Murray's company, the manager's own *Captain Thornton* was excellent, and so was the *Dugald* Creature of a Mr Duff, there was also a good *Mattie* (about whose equipment, by-the-bye, Scott felt such interest that he left his box between the acts to remind Mr Murray that she "must have a mantle with her lanthorn"), but the great and unrivalled attraction was the personification of *Bailie Jarvie* by Charles Mackay, who, being himself a native of Glasgow, entered into the minutest peculiarities of the character with high *gusto*, and gave the west country dialect in its most racy perfection. It was extremely diverting to watch the play of Scott's features during this admirable realization of his conception, and I must add that the behaviour of the Edinburgh audience on all such occasions, while the secret of the novels was preserved, reflected great honour on their good taste and delicacy of feeling. He seldom, in those days, entered his box without receiving some mark of general respect and admiration, but I never heard of any pretext being laid hold of to connect these demonstrations with the piece he had come to witness, or, in short, to do or say anything likely to interrupt his quiet enjoyment of the evening in the midst of his family and friends. The *Rob Roy* had a continued run of forty-one nights, during February and March, and it was played once a week, at least, for many years afterwards.* Mackay, of course, always selected it for his benefit, and I now print from Scott's MS a letter which, no doubt, reached the mimic Bailie in the handwriting of one of the Ballantynes, on the first of these occurrences.

"FRIEND MACKAY,—

"My lawful occasions having brought me from my residence at Ganderclench to this great city, it was my lot to fall into company with certain friends who impetrated from me a consent to behold the stage play, which hath been framed forth of an history entitled *Rob (scu potius Robert) Roy*, which history, although it existeth not in mine erudite work, entitled *Tales of my Landlord*, hath nathless a near relation in style and structure to those pleasant narrations. Wherefore, having sur-

* "Between February 15th, 1819, and March 14th, 1837, *Rob Roy* was played in the Theatre Royal Edinburgh, 235 times"—*Letter from Mr W Murray*

mounted those arguments which were founded upon the unseemliness of a personage in my place and profession appearing in an open stage play-house, and having buttoned the terminations of my cravat into my bosom, in order to preserve mine *incognito*, and induced an outer coat over mine usual garments, so that the hue thereof might not betray my calling, I did place myself (much elbowed by those who little knew whom they did incommode) in that place of the theatre called the two-shilling gallery, and beheld the show with great delectation, even from the rising of the curtain to the fall thereof

"Chiefly, my facetious friend, was I enamoured of the very lively representation of Bailie Nicol Jarvie, insomuch that I became desirous to communicate to thee my great admiration thereof, nothing doubting that it will give thee satisfaction to be apprised of the same. Yet further, in case thou shouldst be of that numerous class of persons who set less store by good words than good deeds, and understanding that there is assigned to each stage player a special night, called a benefit (it will do thee no harm to know that the phrase cometh from two Latin words, *bene* and *facio*), on which their friends and patrons show forth their benevolence, I now send thee mine in the form of a five-ell Web (*hoc jocose* to express a note for £5), as a meet present for the Bailie, himself a weaver, and the son of a worthy deacon of that craft. The which propine I send thee in token that it is my purpose, business and health permitting, to occupy the centre of the pit on the night of thy said beneficiary or benefit

"Friend Mackay! from one whose profession it is to teach others, thou must excuse the freedom of a caution. I trust thou wilt remember that, as excellence in thy art cannot be attained without much labour, so neither can it be extended, or even maintained, without constant and unremitted exertion, and further, that the decorum of a performer's private character (and it gladdeth me to hear that thine is respectable) addeth not a little to the value of his public exertions

"Finally, in respect there is nothing perfect in this world—at least, I have never received a wholly faultless version from the very best of my pupils—I pray thee not to let Rob Roy twirl thee round in the ecstacy of thy joy, in regard it oversteps the limits of nature, which otherwise thou so sedulously preservest in thine admirable national portraiture of Bailie Nicol Jarvie.—I remain thy sincere friend and well-wisher,

"JEDEDIAH CLEISHBOTHAM."

It had been Scott's purpose to spend the Easter vacation in London, and receive his baronetcy, but this was prevented by the serious recurrence of the malady which so much alarmed his friends in the early part of the year 1817, and which had continued ever since to torment him at intervals. The subsequent correspondence will show that afflictions of various sorts were accumulated on his head at the same period —

To the Lord Montague

"MY DEAR LORD,—

"Edinburgh, 4th March, 1819

"The Lord President tells me he has a letter from his son, Captain Charles Hope, R N, who had just taken leave of our High Chief upon the

deck of the Liffey. He had not seen the Duke for a fortnight, and was pleasantly surprised to find his health and general appearance so very much improved. For my part, having watched him with such unremitting attention, I feel very confident in the effect of a change of air and of climate. It is with great pleasure that I find the Duke has received an answer from me respecting a matter about which he was anxious, and on which I could make his mind quite easy. His Grace wished Adam Ferguson to assist him as his confidential secretary, and with all the scrupulous delicacy that belongs to his character, he did not like to propose this, except through my medium as a common friend. Now, I can answer for Adam as I can for myself, that he will have the highest pleasure in giving assistance in every possible way the Duke can desire, and if forty years' intimacy can entitle one man to speak for another, I believe the Duke can find nowhere a person so highly qualified for such a confidential situation. He was educated for business, understands it well, and was long a military secretary, his temper and manners your lordship can judge as well as I can, and his worth and honour are of the very first water. I confess I should not be surprised if the Duke should wish to continue the connection even afterwards, for I have often thought that two hours' letter writing, which is his Grace's daily allowance, is rather worse than the duty of a Clerk of Session, because there is no vacation. Much of this might surely be saved by an intelligent friend on whose style of expression, prudence, and secrecy his Grace could put perfect reliance. Two words marked on any letter by his own hand would enable such a person to refuse more or less positively—to grant directly or conditionally—or, in short, to maintain the exterior forms of the very troublesome and extensive correspondence which his Grace's high situation entails upon him. I think it is Mons le Duc de Saint Simon who tells us of one of Louis XIV's ministers *qu'il avoit la plume*—which he explains by saying it was his duty to imitate the King's handwriting so closely as to be almost undistinguishable, and make him on all occasions *parler très noblement*. I wonder how the Duke gets on without such a friend. In the meantime, however, I am glad I can assure him of Ferguson's willing and ready assistance while abroad, and I am happy to find still further that he had got that assurance before they sailed, for tedious hours occur on board of ship when it will serve as a relief to talk over any of the private affairs which the Duke wishes to entrust to him.

"I have been very unwell from a visitation of my old enemy the cramp in my stomach, which much resembles, as I conceive, the process by which *the devil* would make one's *king's-hood* into a *spleuchan*,* according to the anathema of Burns. Unfortunately, the opiates which the medical people think indispensable to relieve spasms, bring on a habit of body which has to be counteracted by medicines of a different tendency, so as to produce a most disagreeable see-saw—a kind of pull-devil, pull-baker contention, the field of battle being my unfortunate *præcordia*. Or, to say truth, it reminds me of a certain Indian king I have read of in an old voyage, to whom the captain of an European ship generously presented

* *A king's hood*—"The second of the four stomachs of ruminating animals."
JAMIESON.—*Spleuchan*—The Gaelic name of the Highlander's tobacco pouch.

a lock and key, with which the sable potentate was so much delighted, that to the great neglect, both of his household duties and his affairs of state, he spent a whole month in the repeated operation of locking and unlocking his back door. I am better to-day, and I trust shall be able to dispense with these alternations, which are much less agreeable in my case than in that of the Sachem aforesaid, and I still hope to be in London in April.

"I will write to the Duke regularly, for distance of place acts in a contrary ratio on the mind and on the eye trifles, instead of being diminished, as in prospect, become important and interesting, and therefore he shall have a budget of them. Hogg is here busy with his Jacobite songs. I wish he may get handsomely through, for he is profoundly ignorant of history, and it is an awkward thing to read in order that you may write.* I give him all the help I can, but he sometimes poses me. For instance, he came yesterday, open mouth, inquiring what great dignified clergyman had distinguished himself at Kilheerankie—not exactly the scene where one would have expected a churchman to shine; and I found with some difficulty, that he had mistaken Major-General Canon, called, in Kennedy's Latin song, *Canonicus Galloniensis*, for the canon of a cathedral *Ex ungue leonem*. Ever, my dear lord, your truly obliged and faithful

"WALTER SCOTT"

Before this letter reached Lord Montagu his brother had sailed for Lisbon. The Duke of Wellington had placed his house in that capital (the Palace *das Necessidades*) at the Duke of Buccleuch's disposal, and in the affectionate care and cheerful society of Captain Ferguson, the invalid had every additional source of comfort that his friends could have wished for him. But the malady had gone too far to be arrested by a change of climate, and the letter which he had addressed to Scott, when about to embark at Portsmouth, is endorsed with these words—"The last I ever received from my dear friend the Duke of Buccleuch—Alas! alas!" The principal object of this letter was to remind Scott of his promise to sit to Raeburn for a portrait, to be hung up in that favourite residence where the Duke had enjoyed most of his society. "My prodigious undertaking," writes his Grace, "of a west wing at Bowhill, is begun. A library, of forty-one feet by twenty-one, is to be added to the present drawing-room. A space for one picture is reserved over the fireplace, and in this warm situation I intend to place the Guardian of Literature. I should be happy to have my friend Maida appear. It is now almost proverbial, 'Walter Scott and his Dog.' Raeburn should be warned that I am as well acquainted with my friend's hands and arms as with his nose—and Vandyke was of my opinion. Many of R's works are shamefully finished—the face studied, but every thing else neglected. This is a fair opportunity of producing something really worthy of his skill."

* "I am sure I produced two volumes of Jacobite Relics, such as no man in Scotland or England could have produced but myself." So says Hogg, *ipse*—see his *Autobiography*, 1832, p. 88. I never saw the Shepherd so irritated as he was on the appearance of a very severe article on this book in the *Edinburgh Review*, for, to his exquisite delight, the hostile critic selected for *exceptive* encomium one "old Jacobite strain," viz., "Donald M'Gillivray," which Hogg had fabricated the year before. Scott, too, enjoyed this joke almost as much as the Shepherd.

I shall insert here Scott's answer, which never reached the Duke's hand —

“Abbotsford, 15th April, 1819

“MY DEAR LORD DUKE,—

“How very strange it seems that this should be the first letter I address your Grace, and you so long absent from Scotland, and looking for all the news and nonsense of which I am in general such a faithful reporter. Alas! I have been ill—very—very ill—only Dr Baillie says there is nothing of consequence about my malady *except the pain*—a pretty exception—said pain being intense enough to keep me roaring as loud as your Grace's *ex-dei-ant* John of Lorn, and of, generally speaking, from six to eight hours' incessant duration, only varied by intervals of deadly sickness. Poor Sophia was alone with me for some time, and managed a half-distracted pack of servants with spirit, and sense, and presence of mind far beyond her years, never suffering her terror at seeing me in a state so new to her and so alarming to divert her mind an instant from what was fit and proper to be done. Pardon this side compliment to your Grace's little Jacobite, to whom you have always been so kind. If sympathy could have cured me, I should not have been long ill. Gentle and simple were all equally kind, and even old Tom Watson crept down from Falshope to see how I was coming on, and to ejaculate ‘if anything ailed the Shirra, it would be sair on the Duke.’ The only unwelcome resurrection was that of old * * *, whose feud with me (or rather dryness) I had well hoped was immortal, but he came junking over the moor with daughters and ponies, and God knows what, to look after my precious health. I cannot tolerate that man, it seems to me as if I hated him for things not only past and present, but for some future offence which is as yet in the womb of fate.

“I have had as many remedies sent me for cramp and jaundice as would set up a quack doctor—three from Mrs Plummer, each better than the other, one at least from every gardener in the neighbourhood, besides all sorts of recommendations to go to Cheltenham, to Harrogate, to Jericho for aught I know. Now, if there is one thing I detest more than another, it is a watering-place, unless a very pleasant party be previously formed, when, as Tony Lumpkin says, ‘a gentleman may be in a concatenation.’ The most extraordinary recipe was that of my Highland piper, John Bruce, who spent a whole Sunday in selecting twelve stones from twelve *south-running* streams, with the purpose that I should sleep upon them, and be whole. I caused him to be told that the recipe was infallible, but that it was absolutely necessary to success that the stones should be wrapt up in the petticoat of a widow who had never wished to marry again, upon which the piper renounced all hope of completing the charm. I had need of a softer couch than Bruce had destined me, for so general was the tension of the nerves all over the body, although the pain of the spasms in the stomach did not suffer the others to be felt, that my whole left-leg was covered with swelling and inflammation, arising from the unnatural action of the muscles, and I had to be carried about like a child. My right leg escaped better, the muscles there having less irritability, owing to its lame state. Your Grace may imagine the energy of pain in the nobler parts, when cramps in the ex-

tremities, sufficient to produce such effects, were unnoticed by me during their existence. But enough of so disagreeable a subject.

"Respecting the portrait, I shall be equally proud and happy to sit for it, and hope it may be so executed as to be in some degree worthy of the preferment to which it is destined *. But neither my late golden hue, for I was covered with jaundice, nor my present silver complexion (looking much more like a spectre than a man) will present any idea of my quondam beef-eating physiognomy. I must wait till the *age of brass*, the true judicial bronze of my profession, shall again appear on my frontal. I hesitate a little about Raeburn, unless your Grace is quite determined. He has very much to do, works just now chiefly for cash, poor fellow, as he can have but a few years to make money, and has twice already made a very chowder-headed person of me. I should like much (always with your approbation) to try Allan, who is a man of real genius, and has made one or two glorious portraits, though his predilection is to the historical branch of the art. Constable has offered Allan three hundred pounds to make sketches for an edition of the *Tales of my Landlord*, and other novels of that cycle, and says he will give him the same sum next year, so, from being pinched enough, this very deserving artist suddenly finds himself at his ease. He was long at Odessa with the Duke of Richelieu, and is a very entertaining person.

"I saw with great pleasure Wilkie's sketch of your Grace, and I think when I get to town I shall coax him out of a copy, to me invaluable.

"It is doomed this letter is not to close without a request. I conclude your Grace has already heard from fifty applicants that the kirk of Middlebie is vacant, and I come forward as the fifty-first (always barring prior engagements and better claims) in behalf of George Thomson, a son of the minister of Melrose, being the grinder of my boys, and therefore deeply entitled to my gratitude and my good offices, as far as they can go. He is nearer Parson Abraham Adams than any living creature I ever saw—very learned, very religious, very simple, and extremely absent. His father till very lately had but a sort of half stipend, during the incumbency of a certain notorious Mr MacLagan, to whom he acted only as assistant. The poor devil was brought to the grindstone. This poor lad George was his saving angel, not only educating himself, but taking on him the education of two of his brothers, and maintaining them out of his own scanty pittance. He is a sensible lad, and by no means a bad preacher, a staunch Anti-Gallican, and orthodox in his principles. Should your Grace find yourself at liberty to give countenance to this very innocent and deserving creature, I need not say it will add to the many favours you have conferred on me, but I hope the parishioners will have also occasion to say, 'Weel bobbit, George of Middlebie.' Your Grace's aide-de-camp, who knows young Thomson well, will give you a better idea of him than I can do. He lost a leg by an accident in his boyhood, which spoiled as bold and fine-looking a grenadier as ever charged bayonet against a Frenchman's throat. I think your Grace will not like

* The position in the library at Bowhill, originally destined by the late Duke of Buccleuch for a portrait that never was executed, is now filled by that which Raeburn painted in 1808 for Constable.

him the worse for having a spice of military and loyal spirit about him. If you knew the poor fellow, your Grace would take uncommon interest in him, were it but for the odd mixture of sense and simplicity, and spirit and good morals. Somewhat too much of him."

The accounts of Scott's condition circulated in Edinburgh in the course of this April were so alarming that I should not have thought of accepting his invitation to revisit Abbotsford, unless John Ballantyne had given me better tidings about the end of the month. He informed me that his "illustrious friend" (for so both the Ballantynes usually spoke of him) was so much recovered as to have resumed his usual literary tasks, though with this difference, that he now, for the first time in his life, found it necessary to employ the hand of another. I have now before me a letter of the 8th April, in which Scott says to Constable, "Yesterday I began to dictate, and did it easily and with comfort. This is a great point, but I must proceed by little and little, last night I had a slight return of the enemy, but baffled him," and he again writes to the bookseller on the 11th,—"John Ballantyne is here, and returns with copy, which my increasing strength permits me to hope I may now furnish regularly."

The copy (as MS for the press is technically called) which Scott was thus dictating, was that of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, and his amanuenses were William Laidlaw and John Ballantyne, of whom he preferred the latter when he could be at Abbotsford, on account of the superior rapidity of his pen, and also because John kept his pen to the paper without interruption, and though with many an arch twinkle in his eyes, and now and then an audible smack of his lips, had resolution to work on like a well-trained clerk, whereas good Laidlaw entered with such keen zest into the interest of the story as it flowed from the author's lips, that he could not suppress exclamations of surprise and delight—"Gude keep us a'!—the like o' that!—eh sirs! eh sirs!"—and so forth, which did not promote dispatch. I have often, however, in the sequel, heard both these secretaries describe the astonishment with which they were equally affected when Scott began this experiment. The affectionate Laidlaw beseeching him to stop dictating, when his audible suffering filled every pause, "Nay, Willie," he answered, "only see that the doors are fast. I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves, but as to giving over work, that can only be when I am in woollen." John Ballantyne told me that after the first day he always took care to have a dozen of pens made before he seated himself opposite to the sofa on which Scott lay, and that though he often turned himself on his pillow with a groan of torment, he usually continued the sentence in the same breath. But when dialogue of peculiar animation was in progress, spirit seemed to triumph altogether over matter, he arose from his couch and walked up and down the room, raising and lowering his voice, and as it were acting the parts. It was in this fashion that Scott produced the far greater portion of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, the whole of the *Legend of Montrose*, and almost the whole of *Ivanhoe*. Yet, when his health was fairly re-established, he disdained to avail himself of the power of dictation, which he had thus put to the sharpest test, but resumed, and for many years resolutely adhered to, the old plan of writing everything with his own hand. When I once, some time afterwards

expressed my surprise that he did not consult his ease, and spare his eyesight at all events, by occasionally dictating, he answered, "I should as soon think of getting into a sedan-chair while I can use my legs."

On one of the envelopes in which a chapter of the *Bride of Lammermoor* reached the printer in the Canongate about this time—(May 2, 1819)—there is this note in the author's own handwriting —

"Dear James,—These matters will need more than your usual carefulness. Look sharp,—double sharp,—my trust is constant in thee —

"Tarry woo, tarry woo
Tarry woo is ill to spin,
Card it weel, card it weel,
Card it weel ere ye begin,
When tis carded, row'd, and spun,
Then the work is haffins done,
But when woven, drest, and clark,
It may be cleaving for a queen"

"So be it.—W. S."

But to return I rode out to Abbotsford with John Ballantyne towards the end of the spring vacation, and though he had warned me of a sad change in Scott's appearance, it was far beyond what I had been led to anticipate. He had lost a great deal of flesh—his clothes hung loose about him, his countenance was meagre, haggard, and of the deadliest yellow of the jaundice, and his hair, which a few weeks before had been but slightly sprinkled with grey, was now almost literally snow-white. His eye, however, retained its fire unquenched, indeed, it seemed to have gained in brilliancy from the new languor of the other features, and he received us with all the usual cordiality, and even with little perceptible diminution in the sprightliness of his manner. He sat at table while we dined, but partook only of some rice pudding, and after the cloth was drawn, while sipping his toast and water, pushed round the bottles in his old style, and talked with easy cheerfulness of the stout battle he had fought, and which he now seemed to consider as won.

"One day there was," he said, "when I certainly began to have great doubts whether the mischief was not getting at my mind—and I'll tell you how I tried to reassure myself on that score. I was quite unfit for anything like original composition, but I thought if I could turn an old German ballad I had been reading into decent rhymes, I might dismiss my worst apprehensions—and you shall see what came of the experiment." He then desired his daughter Sophia to fetch the MS of *The Noble Möringer*, as it had been taken down from his dictation, partly by her and partly by Mr Laidlaw, during one long and painful day while he lay in bed. He read it to us as it stood, and seeing that both Ballantyne and I were much pleased with the verses, he said he should copy them over,—make them a little "tighter about the joints,"—and give me them to be printed in the *Edinburgh Annual Register* for 1816, to consult him about which volume had partly been the object of my visit, and thus promise he redeemed before I left him.

The reading of this long ballad, however—(it consists of forty-three stanzas)*—seemed to have exhausted him. he retired to his bed-room,

* See Scott's Poetical Works.

and an hour or two after, when we were about to follow his example, his family were distressed by the well-known symptoms of another sharp recurrence of his affliction. A large dose of opium and the hot bath were immediately put in requisition. His good neighbour, Dr Scott of Darnlee, was sent for, and soon attended, and in the course of three or four hours we learned that he was once more at ease. But I can never forget the groans which, during that space, his agony extorted from him. Well knowing the iron strength of his resolution, to find him confessing its extremity by cries audible not only all over the house, but even to a considerable distance from it—for Ballantyne and I, after he was put into his bath, walked forth to be out of the way, and heard him distinctly at the bowling-green—it may be supposed that this was sufficiently alarming, even to my companion, how much more to me, who had never before listened to that voice, except in the gentle accents of kindness and merriment.

I told Ballantyne that I saw this was no time for my visit, and that I should start for Edinburgh again at an early hour—and begged he would make my apologies—in the propriety of which he acquiesced. But as I was dressing, about seven next morning, Scott himself tapped at my door, and entered, looking better I thought than at my arrival the day before. “Don’t think of going,” said he. “I feel hearty this morning, and if my devil does come back again, it won’t be for three days, at any rate. For the present, I want nothing to set me up except a good trot in the open air, to drive away the accursed vapours of the landanum I was obliged to swallow last night. You have never seen Yarrow, and when I have finished a little job I have with Jocund Johnny, we shall all take horse and make a day of it.” When I said something about a ride of twenty miles being rather a bold experiment after such a night, he answered, that he had ridden more than forty, a week before, under similar circumstances, and felt nothing the worse. He added that there was an election on foot, in consequence of the death of Sir John Riddell of Riddell, Member of Parliament for the Selkirk district of Burghs, and that the bad health and absence of the Duke of Buccleuch rendered it quite necessary that he should make exertions on this occasion. “In short,” said he, laughing, “I have an errand which I shall perform—and as I must pass Newark, you had better not miss the opportunity of seeing it under so excellent a *cicerone* as the old Minstrel,

“Whose withered cheek and tresses gray
Shall yet see many a better day”

About eleven o’clock, accordingly, he was mounted, by the help of Tom Purdie, upon a staunch, active cob yclept *Sybil Grey*—exactly such a creature as is described in Mr. Dimmont’s *Dumple*—while Ballantyne sprang into the saddle of noble *Old Montalty*, and we proceeded to the town of Selkirk, where Scott halted to do business at the Sheriff-Clerk’s, and begged us to move onward at a gentle pace until he should overtake us. He came up by-and-bye at a canter, and seemed in high glee with the tidings he had heard about the canvass. And so we rode by Philiphaugh, Carterhaugh, Bowhill, and Newark, he pouring out all the way his picturesque anecdotes of former times—more especially of the fatal

field where Montrose was finally overthrown by Leshe. He described the battle as vividly as if he had witnessed it,—the passing of the Ettrick at daybreak by the Covenanting General's heavy cuirassiers, many of them old soldiers of Gustavus Adolphus, and the wild confusion of the Highland host when exposed to their charge on an extensive *haugh* as flat as a bowling-green. He drew us aside at *Slain-men's-lee*, to observe the green mound that marks the resting-place of the slaughtered royalists, and pointing to the apparently precipitous mountain, Minchmoor, over which Montrose and his few cavaliers escaped, mentioned that, rough as it seemed, his mother remembered passing it in her early days in a coach and six, on her way to a ball at Peebles, several footmen marching on either side of the carriage to prop it up, or drag it through bogs, as the case might require. He also gave us, with all the dramatic effect of one of his best chapters, the history of a worthy family who, inhabiting at the time of the battle a cottage on his own estate, had treated with particular kindness a young officer of Leshe's army quartered on them for a night or two before. When parting from them to join the troops, he took out a purse of gold, and told the good woman that he had a presentiment he should not see another sunset, and in that case would wish his money to remain in her kind hands, but, if he should survive, he had no doubt she would restore it honestly. The young man returned mortally wounded, but lingered awhile under her roof, and finally bequeathed to her and hers his purse and his blessing. "Such," he said, "was the origin of the respectable lairds of ——, now my good neighbours."

The prime object of this expedition was to talk over the politics of Selkirk with one of the Duke of Buccleuch's great store-farmers, who, as the Sheriff had learned, possessed private influence with a doubtful bailie or deacon among the Souters. I forget the result, if ever I heard it. But next morning, having, as he assured us, enjoyed a good night in consequence of this ride, he invited us to accompany him on a similar errand across Bowden Moor, and up the valley of the Ayle, and when we reached a particularly bleak and dreary point of that journey, he informed us that he perceived in the waste below a wreath of smoke, which was the appointed signal that a *waicing* Souther of some consequence had agreed to give him a personal interview where no Whiggish eyes were likely to observe them,—and so, leaving us on the road, he proceeded to thread his way westwards, across moor and bog, until we lost view of him. I think a couple of hours might have passed before he joined us again, which was, as had been arranged, not far from the village of Lilliesleaf. In that place, too, he had some negotiation of the same sort to look after, and when he had finished it, he rode with us all round the ancient woods of Riddell, but would not go near the house, I suppose lest any of the [then] afflicted family might still be there. Many were his lamentations over the catastrophe which had just befallen them. "They are," he said, "one of the most venerable races in the south of Scotland—they were here long before these glens had ever heard the name of Souhis or of Douglas—to say nothing of Buccleuch—they can show a Pope's bull of the tenth century, authorizing the then Riddell to marry a relation within the forbidden degrees. Here they have been for a thou-

sand years at least ; and now all the inheritance is to pass away, merely because one good worthy gentleman would not be contented to enjoy his horses, his hounds, and his bottle of claret, like thirty or forty predecessors, but must needs turn scientific agriculturist, take almost all his fair estate into his own hand, superintend for himself perhaps a hundred ploughs, and try every new nostrum that has been tabled by the quackish *improvers* of the time And what makes the thing ten times more wonderful is, that he kept day-book and ledger, and all the rest of it, as accurately as if he had been a cheesemonger in the Grassmarket” Some of the most remarkable circumstances in Scott’s own subsequent life have made me often recall this conversation—with more wonder than he expressed about the ruin of the Riddells

I remember he told us a world of stories, some tragical, some comical, about the old lairds of this time-honoured lineage, and among others, that of the seven Bibles and the seven bottles of ale, which he afterwards inserted in a note to the *Bride of Lammermoor* * He was also full of anecdotes about a friend of his father’s, a minister of Lalliesleaf, who reigned for two generations the most popular preacher in Teviotdale, but I forget the orator’s name When the original of Saunders Fairford congratulated him in his latter days on the undiminished authority he still maintained—every kirk in the neighbourhood being left empty when it was known he was to mount the *tent* at any country sacrament—the shrewd divine answered, “Indeed, Mr Walter, I sometimes think it’s vera surprising There’s aye a talk of this or that wonderfully gifted young man frae the college ; but whenever I’m to be at the same *occasion* with ony o’ them, I e’en mount the white horse in the Revelations, and he dings them a’”

* “It was once the universal custom to place ale, wine, or some strong liquor, in the chamber of an honoured guest, to assuage his thirst should he feel any on awaking in the night, which, considering that the hospitality of that period often reached excess, was by no means unlikely The author has met some instances of it in former days, and in old-fashioned families It was, perhaps, no poetic fiction that records how

“ ‘ My cummer and I lay down to sleep
With two pint stoups at our bed feet,
And aye when we waken’d we drank them dry
What think you o’ my cummer and I ?’

“It is a current story in Teviotdale that in the house of an ancient family of distinction, much addicted to the Presbyterian cause, a Bible was always put into the sleeping apartment of the guests, along with a bottle of strong ale On some occasion there was a meeting of clergymen in the vicinity of the castle, all of whom were invited to dinner by the worthy baronet, and several abode all night According to the fashion of the times, seven of the reverend guests were allotted to one large barrack-room, which was used on such occasions of extended hospitality The butler took care that the divines were presented, according to custom, each with a Bible and a bottle of ale But after a little consultation among themselves, they are said to have recalled the domestic as he was leaving the apartment ‘My friend,’ said one of the venerable guests, ‘you must know, when we meet together as brethren, the youngest minister reads aloud a portion of Scripture to the rest, only one Bible, therefore, is necessary—take away the other six, and in their place bring six more bottles of ale’

“This synod would have suited the ‘hermit sage’ of Johnson, who answered a pupil who inquired for the real road to happiness, with the celebrated line, ‘Come, my lad, and drink some beer.’”—See *Waverley Novels*

Thus Scott amused himself and us as we jogged homewards ; and it was the same the following day, when (no election matters pressing) he rode with us to the western peak of the Eildon Hills, that he might show me the whole panorama of his Teviotdale, and expound the direction of the various passes by which the ancient forayers made their way into England, and tell the names and the histories of many a monastic chapel and baronial peel, now mouldering in glens and dingles that escape the eye of the traveller on the highways. Among other objects on which he descanted with particular interest were the ruins of the earliest residence of the Kerrs of Cessford, so often opposed in arms to his own chieftains of Brinksome, and a desolate little kirk on the adjoining moor, where the Dukes of Roxburghe are still buried in the same vault with the hero who fell at Turnagain. Turning to the northward, he showed us the crags and tower of Smallholme, and behind it the shattered fragment of Erceldoune, and repeated some pretty stanzas ascribed to the last of the real wandering minstrels of this district, by name *Burn*.—

"Sing Erceldoune and Cowdenknowes,
Where Homes had ance commanding,
And Drygrange with the milk-white ewes,
Twist Tweed and Leader standing
The bird that flees through Redpath tries
And Gledswood banks each morrow,
May chant and sing sweet *Leader's hallo's*
And *Bunny howns of Yarrow*

"But Minstrel Burn cannot assuage
His grief while life endureth,
To see the changes of this age
Which fleeting time procureth,
For mony a place stands in hard case,
Where bly the folks kent nae sorrow,
With Homes that dwelt on Leader side,
And Scotts that dwelt on Yarrow "

That night he had again an attack of his cramp, but not so serious as the former. Next morning he was again at work with Ballantyne at an early hour, and when I parted from him after breakfast he spoke cheerfully of being soon in Edinburgh for the usual business of his Court. I left him, however, with dark prognostications, and the circumstances of this little visit to Abbotsford have no doubt dwelt on my mind the more distinctly from my having observed and listened to him throughout under the painful feeling that it might very probably be my last.

On the 5th of May he received the intelligence of the death of the Duke of Buccleuch, which had occurred at Lisbon on the 20th April. Scott drew up for Ballantyne's newspaper of that week the brief character of Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, which has since been included in his *Prose Miscellanies*. On the 11th of May he returned to Edinburgh, and was present next day at the opening of the Court of Session, when all who saw him were as much struck as I had been at Abbotsford with the lamentable change his illness had produced in his appearance. He was unable to persist in attendance at the Clerks' table, for several weeks

afterwards I think he seldom if ever attempted it, and I well remember that, when the Third Series of the Tales of my Landlord at length came out (which was on the 10th of June) he was known to be confined to bed, and the book was received amidst the deep general impression that we should see no more of that parentage.

The *Bride of Lammermoor* and the *Legend of Montrose* would have been read with indulgence, had they needed it, for the painful circumstances under which they must have been produced were known wherever an English newspaper made its way, but I believe that, except in numerous typical errors, which sprung of necessity from the author's inability to correct any proof-sheets, no one ever affected to perceive in either tale the slightest symptom of his malady. Dugald Dalgetty was placed by acclamation in the same rank with *Bullie Jarvie*—a conception equally new, just, and humorous, and worked out in all the details, as if it had formed the luxurious entertainment of a chair as easy as was ever shaken by *Rabelais*, and though the character of *Montrose* himself seemed hardly to have been treated so fully as the subject merited, the accustomed rapidity of the novelist's execution would have been enough to account for any such defect. Of *Caleb Balderstone* (the hero of one of the many ludicrous delineations which he owed to the late Lord Hadlington, a man of rare pleasantry, and one of the best tellers of old Scotch stories that I ever heard), I cannot say that the general opinion was then, nor do believe it ever since has been, very favourable. It was pronounced at the time, by more than one critic, a mere caricature; and, though *Scott* himself would never in after days admit this censure to be just, he allowed that "he might have sprinkled rather too much parsley over his chicken." But even that blemish, for I grant that I think it a serious one, could not disturb the profound interest and pathos of the *Bride of Lammermoor*—to my fancy the most pure and powerful of all the tragedies that *Scott* ever penned. The reader will be well pleased, however, to have, in place of any critical observations on this work, the following particulars of its composition from the notes which its printer dictated when stretched on the bed from which he well knew he was never to rise.

"The book," says *James Ballantyne*, "was not only written, but published, before Mr *Scott* was able to rise from his bed; and he assured me, that when it was first put into his hands in a complete shape, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained." He did not desire me to understand, nor did I understand, that his illness had erased from his memory the original incidents of the story, with which he had been acquainted from his boyhood. These remained rooted where they had ever been, or, to speak more explicitly, he remembered the general facts of the existence of the father and mother, of the son and daughter, of the rival lovers, of the compulsory marriage, and the attack made by the bride upon the hapless bridegroom, with the general catastrophe of the whole. All these things he recollected, just as he did before he took to his bed; but he literally recollected nothing else—not a single character woven by the romancer, not one of the many scenes and points of humour, nor anything with which he was connected as the writer of the work. 'For a long time,' he said, 'I felt myself very

uneasy in the course of my reading, lest I should be startled by meeting something altogether glaring and fantastic. However, I recollected that you had been the printer, and I felt sure that you would not have permitted anything of this sort to pass.' 'Well,' I said, 'upon the whole, how did you like it?' 'Why,' he said, 'as a whole, I felt it monstrous-gross and grotesque, but still the worst of it made me laugh, and I trusted the good-natured public would not be less indulgent.' I do not think I ever ventured to lead to the discussion of this singular phenomenon again, but you may depend upon it, that what I have now said is as distinctly reported as if it had been taken down in shorthand at the moment, I should not otherwise have ventured to allude to the matter at all. I believe you will agree with me in thinking that the history of the human mind contains nothing more wonderful."

Soon after Scott reappeared in the Parliament House, he came down one Saturday to the vaulted chambers below, where the Advocates' Library was then kept, to attend a meeting of the Faculty, and as the assembly was breaking up he asked me to walk home with him, taking Ballantyne's printing office in our way. He moved languidly, and said, if he were to stay in town many days, he must send for Sybil Grey, but his conversation was heart-whole, and, in particular, he laughed tall, despite his weakness, the stick was flourishing in his hand, over the following almost incredible specimen of that most absurd personage the late Earl of Buchan.

Hearing one morning shortly before this time that Scott was actually *in extremis*, the Earl proceeded to Castle Street, and found the knocker tied up. He then descended to the door in the area, and was there received by honest Peter Mathieson, whose face seemed to confirm the woeful tidings, for in truth his master was ill enough. Peter told his lordship that he had the strictest orders to admit no visitor; but the Earl would take no denial, pushed the bashful coachman aside, and elbowed his way upstairs to the door of Scott's bed-chamber. He had his fingers upon the handle before Peter could give warning to Miss Scott, and when she appeared to remonstrate against such an intrusion, he patted her on the head like a child, and persisted in his purpose of entering the sick-room so strenuously, that the young lady found it necessary to bid Peter see the Earl downstairs again, at whatever damage to his dignity. Peter accordingly, after trying all his eloquence in vain, gave the tottering, bustling, old, meddling coxcomb a single shove,—as respectful, doubt not, as a shove can ever be,—and he accepted that hint, and made a rapid exit. Scott, meanwhile, had heard the confusion, and at length it was explained to him, when, fearing that Peter's gripe might have injured Lord Buchan's feeble person, he desired James Ballantyne, who had been sitting by his bed, to follow the old man home—make him comprehend, if he could, that the family were in such bewilderment of alarm, that the ordinary rules of civility were out of the question, and, in fine, inquire what had been the object of his lordship's intended visit. James proceeded forthwith to the Earl's house in George Street, and found him strutting about his library in a towering indignation. Ballantyne's elaborate demonstrations of respect, however, by degrees softened him, and he condescended to explain himself. "I

wished," said he, "to embrace Walter Scott before he died, and inform him that I had long considered it as a satisfactory circumstance that he and I were destined to rest together in the same place of sepulture. The principal thing, however, was to relieve his mind as to the arrangements of his funeral—to show him a plan which I had prepared for the procession—and, in a word, to assure him that I took upon myself the whole conduct of the ceremonial at Dryburgh." He then exhibited to Ballantyne a formal programme, in which, as may be supposed, the predominant feature was not Walter Scott, but David, Earl of Buchan. It had been settled, *inter alia*, that the said Earl was to pronounce an eulogium over the grave, after the fashion of French Academicians in the Père la Chaise.

And this silliest and vainest of busybodies was the elder brother of Thomas and Henry Erskine! But the story is well known of his boasting one day to the late Duchess of Gordon of the extraordinary talents of his family, when her unscrupulous Grace asked him very coolly whether the wit had not come by the mother, and been all settled on the younger branches?

Scott had several more attacks of his disorder, and some very severe ones, during the autumn of 1819—nor, indeed, had it quite disappeared until about Christmas. But from the time of his return to Abbotsford, in July, when he adopted the system of treatment recommended by a skilful physician (Dr Dick), who had had large experience in maladies of this kind during his Indian life, the seizures gradually became less violent, and his confidence that he was ultimately to baffle the enemy remained unshaken.

I must not forget to set down what his daughter Sophia afterwards told me of his conduct upon one night in June, when he really did despair of himself. He then called his children about his bed, and took leave of them with solemn tenderness. After giving them, one by one, such advice as suited their years and characters, he added, "For myself, my dears, I am unconscious of ever having done any man an injury, or omitted any fair opportunity of doing any man a benefit. I well know that no human life can appear otherwise than weak and filthy in the eyes of God, but I rely on the merits and intercession of our Redeemer." He then laid his hand on their heads and said, "God bless you! Live so that you may all hope to meet each other in a better place hereafter. And now leave me, that I may turn my face to the wall." They obeyed him, but he presently fell into a deep sleep, and, when he awoke from it after many hours, the crisis of extreme danger was felt by himself, and pronounced by his physician, to have been overcome.

Before Scott left Edinburgh, on the 12th of July, he had not only concluded his bargain with Constable for another novel, but, as will appear from some of his letters, made considerable progress in the dictation of *Ivanhoe*.

That he already felt great confidence on the score of his health may be inferred from his allowing his son Walter, about the middle of the month, to join the 18th regiment of hussars, in which he had shortly before received his commission as cornet. Walter was, when he thus quitted Abbotsford to try his chances in the active world, only in the eighteenth year of his age, and the fashion of education in Scotland is such that he

had scarcely ever slept a night under a different roof from his parents' until this separation occurred. He had been treated from his cradle with all the indulgence that a man of sense can ever permit himself to show to any of his children, and for several years he had now been his father's daily companion in all his out-of-doors occupations and amusements. The parting was a painful one; but Scott's ambition centred in the heir of his name, and instead of fruitless pinings and lamentings, he henceforth made it his constant business to keep up such a frank correspondence with the young man as might enable himself to exert over him, when at a distance, the gentle influence of kindness, experience, and wisdom.

About this time, as the succeeding letter will show, Abbotsford had the honour of a short visit from Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, since King of the Belgians. Immediately afterwards Scott heard of the death of Mrs William Erskine, and repaired to Edinburgh to condole with his afflicted friend. His allusions meanwhile to views of buying more land on Tweedside are numerous. These speculations are explained in a most characteristic style to the corner, and we see that one of them was cut short by the tragical death of a bonnet-laird already introduced to the reader's notice—namely, *Lauchie Longlegs*, the admired of Geoffrey Crayon.

“Abbotsford, 3rd October, 1819

“MY DEAR LORD,—

“I am honoured with your Buxton letter. . . . Anent Prince Leopold, I only heard of his approach at eight o'clock in the morning, and he was to be at Selkirk by eleven. The magistrates sent to ask me to help them to receive him. It occurred to me he might be coming to Melrose to see the abbey, in which case I could not avoid asking him to Abbotsford, as he must pass my very door. I mentioned this to Mrs Scott, who was lying quietly in bed, and I wish you had heard the scream she gave on the occasion. ‘What have we to offer him?’ ‘Wine and cake,’ said I, thinking to make all things easy, but she ejaculated, in a tone of utter despair, ‘Cake! where am I to get cake?’ However, being partly consoled with the recollection that his visit was a very improbable incident, and curiosity, as usual, proving too strong for alarm, she set out with me in order not to miss a peep of the great man. James Skene and his lady were with us, and we gave our carriages such additional dignity as a pair of leaders could add, and went off to meet him in full puff. The Prince very civilly told me, that, though he could not see Melrose on this occasion, he wished to come to Abbotsford for an hour. New despair on the part of Mrs Scott, who began to institute a domiciliary search for cold meat through the whole city of Selkirk, which produced *one shoulder of cold lamb*. In the meanwhile, his Royal Highness received the civil honours of the BURSE very graciously. I had hinted to Bailie Lang* that it ought only to be licked *symbolically* on the present occasion, so he flourished it three times before his mouth, but without touching it with his lips, and the Prince followed his example as directed. Lang made an excellent speech, sensible, and feeling, and well delivered. The

* Scott's good friend, Mr Andrew Lang, Procurator Fiscal for Selkirkshire, was then chief magistrate of the county town.

Prince seemed much surprised at this great propriety of expression and behaviour in a magistrate, whose people seemed such a rabble, and whose whole band of music consisted in a drum and fife. He noticed to Baillie Anderson that Selkirk seemed very populous in proportion to its extent. 'On an occasion like this it seems so,' answered the Baillie, neatly enough, 'I thought I question if any magistrates in the kingdom, lord mayors and aldermen not excepted, could have behaved with more decent and quiet good-breeding.' Prince Leopold repeatedly alluded to this during the time he was at Abbotsford. I do not know how Mrs Scott ultimately managed, but with broiled salmon, and blackcock, and partridges, she gave him a very decent lunch, and I chanced to have some very fine old hock, which was mighty german to the matter.

"The Prince seems melancholy, whether naturally or from habit I do not pretend to say; but I do not remember thinking him so at Paris, where I saw him frequently, then a much poorer man than myself, yet he showed some humour, for, alluding to the crowds that followed him everywhere, he mentioned some place where he had gone out to shoot, but was afraid to proceed for fear of 'bagging a boy.' He said he really thought of getting some shooting-place in Scotland, and promised me a longer visit on his return. If I had had a day's notice to have *warned the waters*, we could have met him with a very respectable number of the gentry, but there was no time for this, and probably he liked it better as it was. There was only young Clifton who could have come, and he was shy and cubbish, and would not, though requested by the Selkirk people. He was perhaps ashamed to march through Coventry with them. It hung often and sadly on my mind that *he* was wanting who could and would have received him like a Prince indeed, and yet the meeting betwixt them, had they been fated to meet, would have been a very sad one. I think I have now given your lordship a very full, true, and particular account of our royal visit, unmatched even by that of King Charles at the Castle of Tillicoultry. That we did not speak of it for more than a week after it happened, and that that emphatic monosyllable, *The Prince*, is not heard amongst us more than ten times a day, is, on the whole, to the credit of my family's understanding. The piper is the only one whose brain he seems to have endangered, for, as the Prince said he preferred him to any he had heard in the Highlands—(which, by the way, shows his Royal Highness knows nothing of the matter),—the fellow seems to have become incapable of his ordinary occupation as a forester, and has ut stick and stem without remorse to the tune of *Phaul Phrause*, i.e., the Prince's welcome."

CHAPTER XVII

DEATH OF SCOTT'S MOTHER, UNCLE, AND AUNT—PUBLICATION OF IVANHOE
—SUNDAY AT ABBOTSFORD—PUBLICATION OF THE MONASTERY—
REVISITS LONDON—PORTRAITS—ANECDOTES

TOWARDS the winter of 1819 there prevailed a spirit of alarming insubordination among the mining population of Northumberland and the weavers of the west of Scotland, and Scott was particularly gratified with finding that his own neighbours at Galashiels had escaped the contagion. There can be little doubt that this exemption was principally owing to the personal influence and authority of the Laird of Abbotsford and Sheriff of the Forest, but the people of Galashiels were also fortunate in the qualities of their own benevolent landlords, Mr Scott of Gala, and Mr Pringle of Torwoodlee. The progress of the western *Reformers* by degrees led even the most important *Whigs* in that district to exert themselves in the organization of volunteer regiments, both mounted and dismounted, and, when it became generally suspected that Glasgow and Paisley maintained a dangerous correspondence with the refractory colliers of Northumberland, Scott and his friends the Lairds of Torwoodlee and Gala determined to avail themselves of the loyalty and spirit of the men of Ettrick and Teviotdale, and proposed first raising a company of sharpshooters among their own immediate neighbours, and afterwards—this plan receiving every encouragement—a legion or brigade upon a large scale, to be called the Buccleuch Legion. During November and December, 1819, these matters formed the chief daily care and occupation of the author of *Ivanhoe*, and though he was still obliged to dictate most of the chapters of his novel, we shall see that, in case it should be necessary for the projected levy of Foresters to march upon Tynedale, he was prepared to place himself at their head.

He had again intended, as soon as he should have finished *Ivanhoe*, to proceed to London and receive his baronetcy, but as that affair had been crossed at Easter by his own illness, so at Christmas it was again obliged to be put off in consequence of a heavy series of domestic afflictions. Within one week Scott lost his excellent mother, his uncle Dr Daniel Rutherford, Professor of Botany in the University of Edinburgh, and their sister, Christian Rutherford, already often mentioned as one of the dearest and most esteemed of all his friends and connexions.

The following letters require no further introduction or comment.

To the Lord Montagu, Buzton

“Abbotsford, 12th November 1819

“MY DEAR LORD,—

“* * * * * I wish I had any news to send your lordship.”

but the best is we are all quiet here. The Galashiel weavers, both men and masters, have made their political creed known to me, and have sworn themselves anti-radical. They came in solemn procession, with their banners, and my own piper at their head, whom they had borrowed for the nonce. But the Tweed being in flood, we could only communicate like Wallace and Bruce across the Carron. However, two deputies came through in the boat, and made me acquainted with their loyal purposes. The evening was crowned with two most distinguished actions: the weavers refusing, in the most peremptory manner, to accept of a couple of guineas to buy whiskey, and the renowned John of Skye, piper in ordinary to the Laird of Abbotsford, no less steadily refusing a very handsome collection, which they offered him for his minstrelsy. All this sounds very nonsensical, but the people must be humoured and countenanced when they take the right turn, otherwise they will be sure to take the wrong. The accounts from the west sometimes make me wish our little Duke five or six years older, and able to get on horseback. It seems approaching to the old song—

“Come, fill up our cup, come, fill up our can,
Come, saddle the horses, and call up our men,
Come, open the gates, and let us go free,
And we'll show them the bonnets of bonny Dundee.”

“I am rather too old for that work now, and I cannot look forward to it with the sort of feeling that resembled pleasure, as I did in my younger and more healthy days. However, I have got a good following here, and will endeavour to keep them together till times mend.

“My respectful compliments attend Lady Montagu, and I am always, with the greatest regard, your lordship's very faithful

“WALTER SCOTT.”

To Thomas Scott, Esq., 70th Regiment, Kingston, Canada

“Edinburgh, 22nd December, 1819

“MY DEAR TOM,—

“I wrote you about ten days since, stating that we were all well here. In that very short space a change so sudden and so universal has taken place among your friends here, that I have to communicate to you a most miserable catalogue of losses. Our dear mother was on Sunday, the 12th December, in her usual strength and alertness of mind. I had seen and conversed with her on the Saturday preceding, and never saw her better in my life of late years. My two daughters drank tea with her on Sunday, when she was uncommonly lively, telling them a number of stories, and being in rather unusual spirits, probably from the degree of excitation which sometimes is remarked to precede a paralytic affection. In the course of Monday she received that fatal summons, which at first seemed slight, but in the night betwixt Monday and Tuesday our mother lost the use both of speech and of one side. Since that time she has lain in bed constantly, yet so sensible as to see me and express her earnest blessing on all of us. The power of speech is totally lost, nor is there any hope at her advanced age that the scene can last long—probably a few hours will terminate it; at any rate, life is not to be wished, even for our nearest and dearest, in those circumstances. But this heavy

calamity was only the commencement of our family losses Dr. Rutherford, who had seemed perfectly well, and had visited my mother upon Tuesday, the 14th, was suddenly affected with gout in his stomach, or some disease equally rapid, on Wednesday, the 15th, and without a moment's warning or complaint, fell down a dead man, almost without a single groan You are aware of his fondness for animals he was just stroking the cat after eating his breakfast, as usual, when, without more warning than a half-uttered exclamation, he sank on the ground, and died in the arms of his daughter Anne Though the Doctor had no formed complaint, yet I have thought him looking poorly for some months, and though there was no failure whatever in intellect, or anything which approached it, yet his memory was not so good, and I thought he paused during the last time he attended me, and had difficulty in recollecting the precise terms of his recipe Certainly there was a great decay of outward strength We were very anxious about the effect this fatal news was likely to produce on the mind and decayed health of our aunt, Miss C Rutherford, and resolved, as her health had been gradually falling off ever since she had returned from Abbotsford, that she should never learn anything of it until it was impossible to conceal it longer But God had so ordered it that she was never to know the loss she had sustained, and which she would have felt so deeply On Friday, the 17th December, the second day after her brother's death, she expired without a groan and without suffering, about six in the morning And so we lost an excellent and warm-hearted relation, one of the few women I ever knew whose strength of mental faculties enabled her, at a mature period of life, to supply the defects of an imperfect education It is a most uncommon and afflicting circumstance, that a brother and two sisters should be taken ill the same day—that two of them should die without any rational possibility of the survivance of the third, and that no one of the three could be affected by learning the loss of the other The Doctor was buried on Monday, the 20th, and Miss Rutherford this day (Wednesday, the 22nd), in the burial-place adjoining to and surrounding one of the new episcopal chapels, where Robert Rutherford had purchased a burial-ground of some extent, and parted with one-half to the Russells It is surrounded with a very high wall, and all the separate burial-grounds—five, I think, in number—are separated by party walls going down to the depth of twelve feet, so as to prevent the possibility of encroachment, or of disturbing the relics of the dead—I have purchased one-half of Miss Russell's interest in this sad spot, moved by its extreme seclusion, privacy, and security When poor Jack was buried in the Greyfriars' churchyard, where my father and Anne lie, I thought their graves more encroached upon than I liked to witness, and in this new place I intend to lay our poor mother when the scene shall close—so that the brother and the two sisters, whose fate has been so very closely entwined in death, may not be divided in the grave, and thus I hope you will approve of.

Thursday, December 23rd—My mother still lingers this morning, and as her constitution is so excellent, she may perhaps continue to exist some time, or till another stroke It is a great consolation that she is perfectly easy All her affairs of every sort have been very long arranged for this

great change, and with the assistance of Donaldson and Macculloch, you may depend, when the event takes place, that your interest will be attended to most pointedly. I hope our civil tumults here are like to be ended by the measures of Parliament. I mentioned in my last that Kinloch of Kinloch was to be tried for sedition. He has forfeited his bail, and was yesterday laid under outlawry for non-appearance. Our neighbours in Northumberland are in a deplorable state, upwards of 50,000 blackguards are ready to rise between Tyne and Wear*. On the other hand, the Scottish frontiers are steady and loyal, and arming fast. Scott of Gala and I have offered 200 men, all fine strapping young fellows, and good marksmen, willing to go anywhere with us. We could easily double the number. So the necessity of the times has made me get on horseback once more. Our mother has at different times been perfectly conscious of her situation, and knew every one, though totally unable to speak. She seemed to take a very affectionate farewell of me the last time I saw her, which was the day before yesterday; and as she was much agitated, Dr Keith advised I should not see her again unless she seemed to desire it, which hitherto she has not done. She sleeps constantly, and will probably be so removed. Our family sends love to yours. Yours most affectionately,
 "WALTER SCOTT."

Scott's excellent mother died on the 24th December—the day after he closed the foregoing letter to his brother. On the 18th, in the midst of these accumulated afflictions, the romance of *Ivanhoe* made its appearance.

There is in the library at Abbotsford a fine copy of Baskerville's folio Bible, two vols., printed at Cambridge in 1763, and there appears on the blank leaf, in the trembling handwriting of Scott's mother, this inscription—"To my dear son, *Walter Scott*, from his affectionate mother, *Anne Rutherford*, January 1st, 1819." Under these words her son has written as follows—"This Bible was the gift of my grandfather, Dr John Rutherford, to my mother, and presented by her to me, being, alas! the last gift which I was to receive from that excellent parent, and, as I verily believe, the thing which she most loved in the world—not only in humble veneration of the sacred contents, but as the dearest pledge of her father's affection to her. As such she gave it to me, and as such I bequeath it to those who may represent me, charging them carefully to preserve the same in memory of those to whom it has belonged 1820"

If literary success could have either filled Scott's head or hardened his heart, we should have no such letters as those of December, 1819. *Ivanhoe* was received throughout England with a more clamorous delight than any of the *Scotch novels* had been. The volumes (three in number) were now, for the first time, of the post 8vo form, with a finer paper than hitherto, the press-work much more elegant, and the price accordingly raised from eight shillings the volume to ten, yet the copies sold in this original shape were 12,000.

I ought to have mentioned sooner that the original intention was to bring out *Ivanhoe* as the production of a new hand, and that, to assist this impression, the work was printed in a size and manner unlike the

* This was a ridiculous exaggerated report of that period of alarm

preceding ones; but Constable, when the day of publication approached, remonstrated against this experiment, and it was accordingly abandoned.

The reader has already been told that Scott dictated the greater part of this romance. The portion of the MS which is his own appears, however, not only as well and firmly executed as that of any of the Tales of my Landlord, but distinguished by having still fewer erasures and interlineations, and also by being in a smaller hand. The fragment is beautiful to look at—many pages together without one alteration. It is, I suppose, superfluous to add that in no instance did Scott re-write his prose before sending it to the press. Whatever may have been the case with his poetry, the world uniformly received the *prima cura* of the novelist.

As a work of art, *Ivanhoe* is perhaps the first of all Scott's efforts, whether in prose or in verse, nor have the strength and splendour of his imagination been displayed to higher advantage than in some of the scenes of this romance. But I believe that no reader who is capable of thoroughly comprehending the author's Scotch characters and Scotch dialogue will ever place even *Ivanhoe*, as a work of genius, on the same level with *Waverley* or the *Heart of Midlothian*.

There is, to me, something so remarkably characteristic of Scott's mind and manner in a particular passage of the Introduction which he penned ten years afterwards for this work, that I must be pardoned for extracting it here. He says—"The character of the fair Jewess found so much favour in the eyes of some fair readers, that the writer was censured, because, when arranging the fates of the characters of the drama, he had not assigned the hand of Wilfred to Rebecca, rather than the less interesting Rowena. But, not to mention that the prejudices of the age rendered such an union almost impossible, the author may, in passing, observe, that he thinks a character of a highly virtuous and lofty stamp is degraded rather than exalted by an attempt to reward virtue with temporal prosperity. Such is not the recompense which Providence has deemed worthy of suffering merit, and it is a dangerous and fatal doctrine to teach young persons, the most common readers of romance, that rectitude of conduct and of principle are either naturally allied with, or adequately rewarded by, the gratification of our passions, or attainment of our wishes. In a word, if a virtuous and self-denied character is dismissed with temporal wealth, greatness, rank, or the indulgence of such a rashly-formed or ill-assorted passion as that of Rebecca for *Ivanhoe*, the reader will be apt to say, Verily virtue has had its reward. But a glance on the great picture of life will show, that the duties of self-denial, and the sacrifice of passion to principle, are seldom thus remunerated, and that the internal consciousness of their high-minded discharge of duty produces on their own reflections a more adequate recompense, in the form of that peace which the world cannot give or take away."

The introduction of the charming Jewess and her father originated, I find, in a conversation that Scott held with his friend Skene during the severest season of his bodily sufferings in the early part of this year. "Mr Skene," says that gentleman's wife, "sitting by his bedside, and trying to amuse him as well as he could in the intervals of pain, happened to get on the subject of the Jews, as he had observed them when he spent

some time in Germany in his youth. Their situation had naturally made a strong impression, for in those days they retained their own dress and manners entire, and were treated with considerable austerity by their Christian neighbours, being still locked up at night in their own quarters by great gates, and Mr. Skene, partly in seriousness, but partly from the mere wish to turn his mind at the moment upon something that might occupy and divert it, suggested that a group of Jews would be an interesting feature if he could contrive to bring them into his next novel." Upon the appearance of *Ivanhoe*, he reminded Mr. Skene of this conversation, and said, "You will find this book owes not a little to your German reminiscences." Mrs. Skene adds, "During with us one day, not long before *Ivanhoe* was begun, something that was mentioned led him to describe the sudden death of an advocate of his acquaintance, a Mr. Elphinstone, which occurred in the *Outer House* soon after he was called to the Bar. It was, he said, no wonder that it had left a vivid impression on his mind, for it was the first sudden death he had ever witnessed; and he now related it so as to make us all feel as if we had the scene passing before our eyes. In the death of the Templar in *Ivanhoe*, I recognized the very picture—I believe I may safely say, the very words."

By the way, before *Ivanhoe* made its appearance, I had myself been formally admitted to the author's secret, but had he favoured me with no such confidence, it would have been impossible for me to doubt that I had been present some months before at the conversation which suggested, and indeed supplied all the materials of, one of its most amusing chapters. I allude to that in which our Saxon terms for animals in the field, and our Norman equivalents for them as they appear on the table, and so on, are explained and commented on. All this Scott owed to the after-dinner talk one day in Castle Street of his old friend Mr. William Clerk, who, among other elegant pursuits, has cultivated the science of philology very deeply.

I cannot conclude this chapter without observing that the publication of *Ivanhoe* marks the most brilliant epoch in Scott's history as the literary favourite of his contemporaries. With the novel which he next put forth, the immediate sale of these works began gradually to decline; and though even when that had reached its lowest declension, it was still far above the most ambitious dreams of any other novelist, yet the publishers were afraid the announcement of anything like a falling-off might cast a damp over the spirits of the author. He was allowed to remain for several years under the impression that whatever novel he threw off commanded at once the old triumphant sale of ten or twelve thousand, and was afterwards, when included in the collective edition, to be circulated in that shape also as widely as *Waverley* or *Ivanhoe*. In my opinion, it would have been very unwise in the booksellers to give Scott any unfavourable tidings upon such subjects after the commencement of the malady which proved fatal to him, for that from the first shook his mind; but I think they took a false measure of the man when they hesitated to tell him exactly how the matter stood, throughout 1820 and the three or four following years, when his intellect was as vigorous as it ever had been, and his heart as courageous; and I regret their

scruples (among other reasons) because the years now mentioned were the most costly ones in his life, and for every twelve months in which any man allows himself, or is encouraged by others, to proceed in a course of unwise expenditure, it becomes proportionably more difficult as well as painful for him to pull up, when the mistake is at length detected or recognized.

In the course of December, 1819, and January, 1820, Scott drew up three essays, under the title of *The Visionary*, upon certain popular doctrines or delusions, the spread of which at this time filled with alarm, not only Tories like him, but many persons who had been distinguished through life for their adherence to political liberalism. These papers appeared successively in James Ballantyne's *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, and their parentage being obvious, they excited much attention in Scotland. Scott collected them into a pamphlet, which had also a large circulation, and I remember his showing very particular satisfaction when he observed a mason reading it to his comrades, as they sat at their luncheon, by a new house on Leith Walk. During January, however, his thoughts continued to be chiefly occupied with the details of the proposed corps of Foresters; of which, I believe, it was at last settled, as far as depended on the other gentlemen concerned in it, that he should be the Mayor. He wrote and spoke on this subject with undiminished zeal, until the whole fell to the ground in consequence of the Government's ultimately declining to take on itself any part of the expense, a refusal which must have been fatal to any such project when the Duke of Buccleuch was a minor. He felt the disappointment keenly; but, in the meantime, the hearty alacrity with which his neighbours of all classes gave in their adhesion had afforded him much pleasure, and, as regarded his own immediate dependants, served to rivet the bonds of affection and confidence which were to the end maintained between him and them. Darnick had been especially ardent in the cause, and he thenceforth considered its volunteers as persons whose individual fortunes closely concerned him. I could fill many a page with the letters which he wrote at subsequent periods, with the view of promoting the success of these spirited young fellows in their various departments of industry. They were proud of their patron, as may be supposed, and he was highly gratified, as well as amused, when he learned that—while the rest of the world were talking of "the Great Unknown"—his usual *sobriquet* among these villagers was "The Duke of Darnick." Already his possessions almost encircled this picturesque and thriving hamlet, and there were few things on which he had more strongly fixed his fancy than acquiring a sort of symbol of seigniorial power there, by becoming the purchaser of a certain then ruinous tower that predominated, with a few coeval trees, over the farmhouses and cottages of his ducal vassals. A letter, previously quoted, contains an allusion to this Peelhouse of Darnick, which is moreover exactly described in the novel which he had now in hand—the *Monastery*. The interest Scott seemed to take in the Peel awakened, however, the pride of its hereditary proprietor, and when that worthy person, who had made some money by trade in Edinburgh, resolved on fitting it up for the evening retreat of his own life, his *Grace of Darnick* was too happy to waive his pretensions.

This was a winter of uncommon severity in Scotland, and the snow lay so deep and so long as to interrupt very seriously all Scott's country operations. I find, in his letters to Laidlaw, various paragraphs expressing the concern he took in the hardships which his poor neighbours must be suffering.

On the 25th he writes thus—

"DEAR WILLIE,—

"I have yours with the news of the inundation, which, it seems, has done no damage. I hope *Mar* will be taken care of. He should have a bed in the kitchen, and always be called indoors after it is dark, for all the kind are savage at night. Please cause Swanston to knock him up a box, and fill it with straw from time to time. I enclose a cheque for £50 to pay accounts, &c. Do not let the poor bodies wait for a £5, or even a £10, more or less.

" ' We 'll get a blessing wi' the lave,
And never muss 't ' " *

In the course of this month, through the kindness of Mr Croker, Scott received from the late Earl Bathurst, then Colonial Secretary of State, the offer of an appointment in the civil service of the East India Company for his second son; and this seemed at the time too good a thing not to be gratefully accepted, though the apparently increasing prosperity of his fortunes induced him, a few years afterwards, to indulge his parental feelings by throwing it up.

About the middle of February—it having been ere that time arranged that I should marry his eldest daughter in the course of the spring—I accompanied him and part of his family on one of those flying visits to Abbotsford, with which he often indulged himself on a Saturday during term. Upon such occasions Scott appeared at the usual hour in Court, but wearing, instead of the official suit of black, his country morning dress, green jacket and so forth, under the clerk's gown, a license of which many gentlemen of the long robe had been accustomed to avail themselves in the days of his youth—it being then considered as the authentic badge that they were lairds as well as lawyers—but which, to use the dialect of the place, had fallen into desuetude before I knew the Parliament House. He was, I think, one of the two or three, or, at most, the half-dozen, who still adhered to this privilege of their order, and it has now, in all likelihood, become quite obsolete, like the ancient custom, a part of the same system, for all Scotch barristers to appear without gowns or wigs, and in coloured clothes, when upon circuit. At noon, when the Court broke up, Peter Mathieson was sure to be in attendance in the Parliament Close, and five minutes after the gown had been tossed off, and Scott, rubbing his hands for glee, was under weigh for Tweedside. On this occasion, he was, of course, in mourning, but I have thought it worth while to preserve the circumstance of his usual Saturday's costume. As we proceeded, he talked without reserve of the novel of the Monastery, of which he had the first volume with him, and mentioned, what he had probably forgotten when he wrote the Introduction of 1830

that a good deal of that volume had been composed before he concluded *Ivanhoe*. "It was a relief," he said, "to interlay the scenery most familiar to me with the strange world for which I had to draw so much on imagination."

Next morning there appeared at breakfast John Ballantyne, who had at this time a shooting or hunting-box a few miles off in the vale of the Leader and with him Mr Constable his guest; and it being a fine clear day, as soon as Scott had read the Church service and one of Jeremy Taylor's sermons, we all sallied out before noon on a perambulation of his upland territories, Maida and the rest of the favourites accompanying our march. At starting we were joined by the constant henchman, Tom Purdie—and I may save myself the trouble of any attempt to describe his appearance, for his master has given us an immutably true one in introducing a certain personage of his *Redgauntlet*.—"He was, perhaps, sixty years old, yet his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet-black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity, the last somewhat impaired, perhaps, by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance; eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair, a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unpaired teeth of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait." Equip this figure in Scott's cast-off green jacket, white hat, and drab trousers, and imagine that years of kind treatment, comfort, and the honest consequence of a confidential *gracie* had softened away much of the hardness and harshness originally impressed on the visage by anxious penury and the sinister habits of a *black-fisher*, and the Tom Purdie of 1820 stands before us.

We were all delighted to see how completely Scott had recovered his bodily vigour, and none more so than Constable, who, as he puffed and panted after him up one ravine and down another, often stopped to wipe his forehead, and remarked that "it was not every author who should lead him such a dance." But Purdie's face shone with rapture as he observed how severely the bookseller's activity was tasked. Scott exclaiming exultingly, though perhaps for the tenth time, "This will be a glorious spring for our trees, Tom!" "You may say that, Sheriff," quoth Tom, and then lingering a moment for Constable, "My certy," he added, scratching his head, "and I think it will be a grand season for our *buiks* too." But indeed Tom always talked of our *buiks* as if they had been as regular products of the soil as our *ails* and our *birds*. Having threaded first the Hexilecleugh, and then the Rhymer's Glen, we arrived at Huntly Burn, where the hospitality of the kind *Herd Sisters*, as Scott called the Miss Ferrisons, reanimated our exhausted bibliopoles, and gave them courage to extend their walk a little farther down the same famous track. Here there was a small cottage in a very sequestered situation, by making some little additions to which Scott thought it might be converted into a suitable summer residence for his daughter and future son-in-law. The details of that plan were soon settled, it was agreed on all

hands that a sweeter scene of seclusion could not be fancied. He repeated some verses of Rogers' "Vish," which paint the spot:—

"Mine be a cot beside the hill,
A bee-hive's hum shall soothe my ear,
A willowy brook that turns a mill,
With many a fall shall linger near," &c.

But when he came to the stanza—

"And Lucy at her wheel shall sing,
In russet gown and apron blue,"

he departed from the text, adding—

"But if blue stockings here you bring,
The Great Unknown won't dine with you."

Johnny Ballantyne, a projector to the core, was particularly zealous about this embryo establishment. Foreseeing that he should have had walking enough ere he reached Huntly Burn, his dapper little New-market groom had been ordered to fetch *Old Mortality* thither, and now, mounted on his fine hunter, he capered about us, looking pallid and emaciated as a ghost, but as gay and cheerful as ever, and would fain have been permitted to ride over hedge and ditch to mark out the proper line of the future avenue. Scott admonished him that the country people, if they saw him at such work, would take the whole party for heathens, and clapping spurs to his horse he left us. "The deil's in the body," quoth Tom Purdie, "he'll be ower every yett atween this and Turn-again, though it be the Lord's day. I wadna wonder if he were to be *ceeted* before the Session." "Be sure, Tam," cries Constable, "that ye egg on the Dominic to blaw up his father. I wadna grudge a hundred miles o' gait to see the ne'er-do-weel on the stool, and neither, I'll be sworn, would the Sheriff." "Na, na," quoth the Sheriff, "we'll let sleeping dogs be, Tam."

As we walked homeward, Scott, being a little fatigued, laid his left hand on Tom's shoulder and leaned heavily for support, chatting to his "Sunday pony," as he called the affectionate fellow, just as freely as with the rest of the party, and Tom put in his word shrewdly and manfully, and grinned and grunted whenever the joke chanced to be within his apprehension. It was easy to see that his heart swelled within him from the moment that the Sheriff got his collar in his gripe.

There arose a little dispute between them about what tree or trees ought to be cut down in a hedgerow that we passed, and Scott seemed somewhat ruffled with finding that some previous hints of his on that head had not been attended to. When we got into motion again, his hand was on Constable's shoulder, and Tom dropped a pace or two to the rear, until we approached a gate, when he jumped forward and opened it. "Give us a pinch of your snuff, Tom," quoth the Sheriff. Tom's mull was produced, and the hand resumed its position. I was much diverted with Tom's behaviour when we at length reached Abbotsford. There were some garden chairs on the green in front of the cottage porch. Scott sat down on one of them to enjoy the view of his new tower as it gleamed in the sunset, and Constable and I did the like. Mr. Purdie remained lounging near us for a few minutes, and then asked the Sheriff "to speak

a word " They withdrew together into the garden—and Scott presently rejoined us with a particularly comical expression of face As soon as Tom was out of sight, he said, "Will ye guess what he has been saying, now? Well, this is a great satisfaction! Tom assures me that he has thought the matter over, and *will take my advice* about the thinning of that clump behind Captain Ferguson's "

I must not forget that, whoever might be at Abbotsford, Tom always appeared at his master's elbow on Sunday, when dinner was over, and drank long life to the Laird and the Lady and all the good company, in a quag of whiskey, or a tumbler of wine, according to his fancy I believe Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction that, among all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-doors* servant, but in truth he kept by the old fashion even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly seen practised by any other gentleman He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he happened to be in the rumble, and when there was any very young lad in the household, he held it a point of duty to see that his employments were so arranged as to leave time for advancing his education, made him bring his copy-book once a week to the library, and examined him as to all that he was doing Indeed, he did not confine this humanity to his own people Any steady servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming and going With all this, Scott was a very rigid enforcer of discipline—contrived to make it thoroughly understood by all about him that they must do their part by him as he did his by them, and the result was happy I never knew any man so well served as he was,—so carefully, so respectfully, and so silently, and I cannot help doubting if, in any department of human operations, real kindness ever compromised real dignity

Prince Gustavus Vasa was spending this winter in Edinburgh with his Royal Highness's accomplished attendant, the Baron Polier I met them frequently in Castle Street, and remember as especially interesting the first evening that they dined there The only portrait in Scott's Edinburgh dining-room was one of Charles XII of Sweden, and he was struck, as indeed every one must have been, with the remarkable resemblance which the exiled Prince's air and features presented to the hero of his race Young Gustavus, on his part, hung with keen and melancholy enthusiasm on Scott's anecdotes of the expedition of Charles Edward Stuart The Prince, accompanied by Scott and myself, witnessed the ceremonial of the proclamation of King George IV. on the 2nd of February at the Cross of Edinburgh, from a window over Mr Constable's shop in the High Street, and on that occasion also the air of sadness that mixed in his features with eager curiosity was very affecting Scott explained all the details to him, not without many lamentations over the barbarity of the Auld Reekie bailies, who had removed the beautiful Gothic Cross itself, for the sake of widening the thoroughfare The weather was fine, the sun shone bright, and the antique tabards of the heralds, the trumpet-notes of "God Save the King," and the hearty

cheerings of the immense uncovered multitude that filled the noble old street, produced altogether a scene of great splendour and solemnity. The royal exile envied it with a flushed cheek and a watery eye, and Scott, observing his emotion, withdrew with me to another window, whispering, "Poor lad! poor lad!—God help him." Later in the season the Prince spent a few days at Abbotsford.

The novel of the *Monastery* was published by Messrs Longman and Co in the beginning of March. It appeared not in the post 8vo form of *Ivanhoe*, but in three vols. 12mo, like the earlier works of the series. In fact, a few sheets of the *Monastery* had been printed before Scott agreed to let *Ivanhoe* have "By the Author of *Waverley*" on its title-page; and the different shapes of the two books belonged to the abortive scheme of passing off "Mr Lawrence Templeton" as a hitherto unheard-of candidate for literary success.

At the rising of his Court on the 12th of March, Scott proceeded to London for the purpose of receiving his brevetcy, which he had been prevented from doing in the spring of the preceding year by his own illness, and again at Christmas by accumulated family afflictions. On his arrival in town, his son the Cornet met him, and they both established themselves at Miss Dumergue's.

One of his first visitors was Sir Thomas Lawrence, who informed him that the King had resolved to adorn the great gallery, then in progress at Windsor Castle, with portraits by his hand of his Majesty's most distinguished contemporaries, all the reigning monarchs of Europe, and their chief ministers and generals, had already sat for this purpose, on the same walls the King desired to see exhibited those of his own subjects who had attained the highest honours of literature and science, and it was his pleasure that the series should commence with Walter Scott. The portrait was of course begun immediately, and the head was finished before Scott left town. Sir Thomas has caught and fixed with admirable skill one of the loftiest expressions of Scott's countenance at the proudest period of his life—to the perfect truth of the representation every one who ever surprised him in the act of composition at his desk will bear witness. The expression, however, was one with which many who had seen the man often were not familiar, and it was extremely unfortunate that Sir Thomas filled in the figure from a separate sketch after he had quitted London. When I first saw the head I thought nothing could be better, but there was an evident change for the worse when the picture appeared in its finished state, for the rest of the person had been done on a different scale, and this neglect of proportion takes considerably from the majestic effect which the head itself, and especially the mighty pile of forehead, had in nature. I hope one day to see a good engraving of the head alone, as I first saw it floating on a dark sea of canvas.

Lawrence told me, several years afterwards, that, in his opinion, the two greatest men he had painted were the Duke of Wellington and Sir Walter Scott, "And it was odd," said he, "that they both chose usually the same hour for sitting—seven in the morning. They were both as patient sitters as I ever had. Scott, however, was, in my case at least, a very difficult subject. I had selected what struck me as his noblest look, but when he was in the chair before me, he talked away

on all sorts of subjects in his usual style, so that it cost me great pains to bring him back to solemnity, when I had to attend to anything beyond the outline of a subordinate feature. I soon found that the surest recipe was to say something that would lead him to recite a bit of poetry. I used to introduce, by hook or by crook, a few lines of Campbell or Byron—he was sure to take up the passage where I left it, or *cap* it by something better, and then, when he was, as Dryden says of one of his heroes—

“Made up of three parts fire—so full of heaven,
It sparkled at his eyes”

“Then was my time, and I made the best use of it. The hardest day’s work I had with him was once when * * *† accompanied him to my painting-room. * * * was in particularly gay spirits, and nothing would serve him but keeping both artist and sitter in a perpetual state of merriment by anecdote upon anecdote about poor Sheridan. The anecdotes were mostly in themselves black enough, but the style of the *conteur* was irresistibly quaint and comical. When Scott came next, he said he was ashamed of himself for laughing so much as he listened to them, ‘for truly,’ quoth he, ‘if the tittle was fact, * * * might have said to Sherry, as Lord Braxfield once said to an eloquent culprit at the bar, ‘Ye’re a vera clever chiel,’ man, but ye wad be nane the waur o’ a hanging.’”

It was also during this visit to London that Scott sat to Mr (now Sir Francis) Chantrey for that bust which alone preserves for posterity the cast of expression most fondly remembered by all who ever mingled in his domestic circle. Chantrey’s request that Scott would sit to him was communicated through Mr Allan Cunningham, then employed as clerk of the works in our great sculptor’s establishment. Mr Cunningham, in his early days, when gaining his bread as a stonemason in Nithsdale, made a pilgrimage on foot into Edinburgh, for the sole purpose of seeing the author of *Marmion* as he passed along the street. He was now in possession of a celebrity of his own, and had mentioned to his patron his purpose of calling on Scott to thank him for some kind message he had received, through a common friend, on the subject of those “Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song” which first made his poetical talents known to the public. Chantrey embraced this opportunity of conveying to Scott his own long-cherished ambition of modelling his head, and Scott at once assented to the flattering proposal. “It was about nine in the morning,” says Mr Cunningham, “that I sent in my card to him at Miss Dumergue’s in Piccadilly,—it had not been gone a minute when I heard a quick heavy step coming, and in he came, holding out both hands, as was his custom, and saying, as he pressed mine—‘Allan Cunningham, I am glad to see you.’” “I said something,” continues Mr C, “about the pleasure I felt in touching the hand that had charmed me so much. He moved his hand, and with one of his comic smiles, said, ‘Ay, and a big brown hand it is.’ I was a little abashed at first. Scott saw it, and soon put me at my ease, he had the power, I had almost called it the art, but art it was not, of winning one’s heart

† A distinguished Whig friend.

and restoring one's confidence beyond any man I ever met." Then ensued a little conversation, in which Scott complimented Allan on his ballads, and urged him to try some work of more consequence, quoting Burns' words, "for dear auld Scotland's sake," but being engaged to breakfast in a distant part of the town, he presently dismissed his visitor, promising to appear next day at an early hour, and submit himself to Mr Chantrey's inspection.

Chantrey's purpose had been the same as Lawrence's—to seize a poetical phasis of Scott's countenance, and he proceeded to model the head as looking upwards gravely and solemnly. The talk that passed, meantime, had equally amused and gratified both, and fortunately, at parting, Chantrey requested that Scott would come and breakfast with him next morning before they recommenced operations in the studio. Scott accepted the invitation, and when he arrived again in Ecclestone Street, found two or three acquaintances assembled to meet him, among others, his old friend Richard Heber. The breakfast was, as any party in Sir Francis Chantrey's house was sure to be, a gay and joyous one, and not having seen Heber in particular for several years, Scott's spirits were unusually excited by the presence of an intimate associate of his youthful days. I transcribe what follows from Mr Cunningham's Memorandum—

"Heber made many inquiries about old friends in Edinburgh, and old books and old houses, and reminded the other of their earlier socialities. 'Ay,' said Mr Scott, 'I remember we once dined out together, and sat so late that, when we came away, the night and day were so neatly balanced that we resolved to walk about till sunrise. The moon was not down, however, and we took advantage of her ladyship's lantern and climbed to the top of Arthur's Seat; when we came down we had a rare appetite for breakfast.' 'I remember it well,' said Heber, 'Edinburgh was a wild place in those days, it abounded in clubs—convivial clubs.' 'Yes,' replied Mr. Scott, 'and abounds still, but the conversation is calmer, and there are no such sallies now as might be heard in other times. One club, I remember, was infested with two Kemps, father and son. When the old man had done speaking the young one began, and before he grew weary the father was refreshed and took up the song. John Clerk, during a pause, was called on for a stave, he immediately struck up in a psalm-singing tone, and electrified the club with a verse which sticks like a burr to my memory—

"Now, God Almighty judge James Kemp,
And likewise his son John,
And hang them over hell in hemp,
And burn them in brimstone."

"In the midst of the mirth which this specimen of psalmody raised, John (commonly called Jack) Fuller, the Member for Surrey, and standing jester of the House of Commons, came in. Heber, who was well acquainted with the free and joyous character of that worthy, began to lead him out by relating some festive anecdotes. Fuller growled approbation, and indulged us with some of his odd sallies, things which, he assured us, 'were d——d good, and true too, which was better.' Mr. Scott, who was standing when Fuller came in, eyed him at first with a

look grave and considerate, but as the stream of conversation flowed, his keen eye twinkled brighter and brighter, his stature increased, for he drew himself up, and seemed to take the measure of the hoary joker, body and soul. An hour or two of social chat had meanwhile induced Mr Chantrey to alter his views as to the bust, and when Mr Scott left us, he said to me privately, 'thus will never do, I shall never be able to please myself with a perfectly serene expression. I must try his conversational look, take him when about to break out into some sly funny old story.' As Chantrey said this, he took a string, cut off the head of the bust, put it into its present position, touched the eyes and the mouth slightly, and wrought such a transformation upon it that when Scott came to his third sitting, he smiled and said, 'Ay, ye're mair like yoursel now! Why, Mr Chantrey, no witch of old ever performed such cantrips with clay as this!'

These sittings were seven in number, but when Scott revisited London a year afterwards, he gave Chantrey several more, the bust being by that time in marble. Allan Cunningham, when he called to bid him farewell, as he was about to leave town on the present occasion, found him in Court dress, preparing to kiss hands at the *levée* on being gazetted as baronet. "He seemed anything but at his ease," says Cunningham, "in that strange attire, he was like one in armour—the stiff cut of the coat, the large shining buttons and buckles, the lace ruffles, the queue, the sword, and the cocked hat formed a picture at which I could not forbear smiling. He surveyed himself in the glass for a moment and burst into a hearty laugh. 'Oh, Allan,' he said, 'Oh, Allan, what creatures we must make of ourselves in obedience to Madam Etiquette! Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this Fashion is? how giddily he turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty?'"*

Scott's baronetcy was conferred on him, not in consequence of any ministerial suggestion, but by the King personally and of his own unsolicited motion, and when the poet kissed his hand, he said to him, 'I shall always reflect with pleasure on Sir Walter Scott's having been the first creation of my reign.'

The Gazette announcing his new dignity was dated March 30th, and published on the 2nd April, 1820, and the baronet, as soon afterwards as he could get away from Lawrence, set out on his return to the north, for he had such respect for the ancient prejudice (a classical as well as a Scottish one) against marrying in May, that he was anxious to have the ceremony in which his daughter was concerned over before that unlucky month should commence. It is needless to say that during this stay in London he had again experienced, in its fullest measure, the enthusiasm of all ranks of his acquaintance, and I shall now transcribe a few paragraphs from letters, which will show, among other things, how glad he was when the hour came that restored him to his ordinary course of life.

To Mrs Scott

"March 27, Piccadilly

"MY DEAR CHARLOTTE,—

"I have the pleasure to say that Lord Sidmouth has promised to

* Much Ado about Nothing, Act III. Scene 3.

dismiss me in all my honours by the 30th, so that I can easily be with you by the end of April, and you and Sophia may easily select the 28th, 29th, or 30th, for the ceremony. I have been much fêted here, as usual, and had a very quiet dinner at Mr. Arbuthnot's yesterday with the Duke of Wellington, where Walter heard the great lord in all his glory talk of war and Waterloo. Here is a hellish—yes, literally a hellish bustle. My head turns round with it. The whole mob of the Middlesex blackguards pass through Piccadilly twice a day, and almost drive me mad with their noise and vociferation*. Pray do, my dear Charlotte, write soon. You know those at a distance are always anxious to hear from home. I beg you to say what would give you pleasure that I could bring from this place, and whether you want anything from Mrs. Arthur for yourself, Sophia, or Anne; also what would please little Charles. You know you may stretch a point on this occasion. Richardson says your honours will be Gazetted on Saturday; certainly very soon, as the King, I believe, has signed the warrant. When or how I shall see him is not determined, but I suppose I shall have to go to Brighton. My best love attends the girls, little Charles, and all the quadrupeds.

"I conclude that the marriage will take place in Castle Street, and want to know where they go, &c. All this you will have to settle without my wise head; but I shall be terribly critical—so see you do all right. I am always, dearest Charlotte, most affectionately yours,

WALTER SCOTT"

("For the Lady Scott of Abbotsford—to be")

To Mr James Ballantyne.

"28th March, 96 Piccadilly

"DEAR JAMES,—

"I am much obliged by your attentive letter. Unquestionably Longman and Co sell their books at subscription price, because they have the first of the market, and only one-third of the books, so that, as they say with us, 'let them care that come ahunt.' Thus I knew and foresaw, and the ragings of the booksellers, considerably aggravated by the displeasure of Constable and his house, are ridiculous enough; and as to their injuring the work, if it have a principle of locomotion in it, they cannot stop it—if it has not, they cannot make it move. I care not a bent twopence about their quarrels; only I say now, as I always said, that Constable's management is best, both for himself and the author; and, had we not been controlled by the narrowness of discount, I would put nothing past him. I agree with the public in thinking the work not very interesting; but it was written with as much care as the others—that is, with no care at all, and,

"'If it is no weil bobbet we'll bobb it again'

"On these points I am Atlas. I cannot write much in this bustle of engagements, with Sir Francis's mob holloaing under the windows. I find that even this light composition demands a certain degree of silence, and I might as well live in a cotton-mull. Lord Sidmouth tells me I will

*The general election was going on

obtain leave to quit London by the 30th, which will be delightful news, for I find I cannot bear late hours and great society so well as formerly, and yet it is a fine thing to hear politics talked of by Ministers of State, and war discussed by the Duke of Wellington.

"My occasions here will require that John or you send me two notes payable at Coutts' for £300 each, at two and three months' date. I will write to Constable for one at £350, which will settle my affairs here—which, with fees and other matters, come, as you may think, pretty heavy. Let the bills be drawn payable at Coutts', and sent without delay. I will receive them safe if sent under Mr Freeling's cover. Mention particularly what you are doing, for now is your time to push miscellaneous work. Pray take great notice of inaccuracies in the novels. They are very very many—some mine, I daresay—but all such as you may and ought to correct. If you would call on William Erskine (who is your well-wisher, and a little mortified he never sees you), he would point out some of them.

"Do you ever see Lockhart? You should consult him on every doubt where you would refer to me if present. Yours very truly, "WS"

While Scott remained in London, the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh became vacant by the death of Dr Thomas Brown, and among others who proposed themselves as candidates to fill it was the author of the *Isle of Palms*. He was opposed in the Town Council (who are the patrons of most of the Edinburgh chairs) on various pretences, but solely, in fact, on party grounds, certain humorous political pieces having much exacerbated the Whigs of the North against him, and I therefore wrote to Scott, requesting him to animate the Tory Ministers in his behalf. Sir Walter did so, and Mr Wilson's canvass was successful.

Sir Walter, accompanied by the Cornet, reached Edinburgh late in April, and on the 29th of that month he gave me the hand of his daughter Sophia. The wedding, *more Scotico*, took place in the evening; and, adhering on all such occasions to ancient modes of observance with the same punctiliousness which he mentions as distinguishing his worthy father, he gave a jolly supper afterwards to all the friends and connexions of the young couple.

His excursions to Tweedside during Term-time were, with very rare exceptions, of the sort which I have described, but he departed from his rule about this time, in honour of the Swedish Prince, who had expressed a wish to see Abbotsford before leaving Scotland and assembled a number of his friends and neighbours to meet his Royal Highness. Of the invitations which he distributed on this occasion I insert one specimen—that addressed to Mr Scott of Gala

*"To the Baron of Galasticks
The Knight of Abbotsford sends greeting*

"Trusty and well-beloved—Whereas Gustavus, Prince Royal of Sweden, proposeth to honour our poor house of Abbotsford with his presence on Thursday next, and to repose himself there for certain days, we do heartily pray you, out of the love and kindness which is and shall abide

betwixt us, to be aiding to us at this conjuncture, and to repair to Abbotsford with your lady, either upon Thursday or Friday, as may best suit your convenience and pleasure, looking for no denial at your hands Which loving countenance we will, with all thankfulness, return to you at your mansion of Gala The hour of appearance being five o'clock, we request you to be then and there present, as you love the honour of the name, and so advance banners in the name of God and St Andrew!

“WALTER SCOTT.

“Given at Edinburgh, 20th May, 1820 ”

The visit of Count Itterburg is alluded to in a letter to the Cornet, who had now rejoined his regiment in Ireland It appears that on reaching head-quarters he had found a charger *hors de combat*

In May, 1820, Scott received from both the English Universities the highest compliment which it was in their power to offer him The Vice-Chancellors of Oxford and Cambridge communicated to him, in the same week, their request that he would attend at the approaching Commemorations, and accept the honorary degree of Doctor in Civil Law It was impossible for him to leave Scotland again that season, and on various subsequent renewals of the same flattering proposition from either body, he was prevented, by similar circumstances, from availing himself of their distinguished kindness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

AUTUMN AT ABBOTSFORD—KINILWORTH PUBLISHED—ILLNESS AND
DEATH OF JOHN BALLANTINE—ANECDOTES

ABOUT the middle of August (1820) my wife and I went to Abbotsford, and we remained there for several weeks, during which I became familiarized to Sir Walter Scott's mode of existence in the country. It was necessary to observe it, day after day, for a considerable period, before one could believe that such was, during nearly half the year, the routine of life with the most productive author of his age. The humblest person who stayed merely for a short visit must have departed with the impression that what he witnessed was an occasional variety, that Scott's comitessy prompted him to break in upon his habits when he had a stranger to amuse, but that it was physically impossible that the man who was writing the Waverley romances at the rate of nearly twelve volumes in the year, could continue, week after week and month after month, to devote all but a hardly perceptible fraction of his mornings to out-of-doors occupations, and the whole of his evenings to the entertainment of a constantly varying circle of guests.

The hospitality of his afternoons must alone have been enough to exhaust the energies of almost any man, for his visitors did not mean, like those of country houses in general, to enjoy the landlord's good cheer and amuse each other, but the far greater proportion arrived from a distance, for the sole sake of the poet and novelist himself, whose person they had never before seen, and whose voice they might never again have any opportunity of hearing. No other villa in Europe was ever resorted to from the same motives, and to anything like the same extent, except Ferney, and Voltaire never dreamt of being visible to his *hunters*, except for a brief space of the day—few of them even dined with him, and none of them seem to have slept under his roof. Scott's establishment, on the contrary, resembled in every particular that of the affluent idler, who, because he has inherited, or would fain transmit, political influence in some province, keeps open house, receives as many as he has room for, and sees their apartments occupied, as soon as they vacate them, by another troop of the same description. Even on gentlemen guiltless of ink-bled, the exercise of hospitality upon this sort of scale is found to impose a heavy tax, few of them, now-a-days, think of maintaining it for any large portion of the year. Very few indeed below the highest rank of the nobility—in whose case there is usually a staff of led-captains, led-chaplains, servile drudges, and semi-professional talkers and jokers from London, to take the chief part of the burden. Now, Scott had often in his mouth the pithy verses—

"Conversation is but carving,—
 Give no more to every guest
 Than he's able to digest,
 Give him always of the prime,
 And but a little at a time,
 Carve to all but just enough,
 Let them neither starve nor stuff,
And that you may have your due,
Let your neighbours carve for you."

and he, in his own familiar circle always, and in other circles where it was possible, furnished a happy exemplification of these rules and regulations of the Dean of St Patrick's. But the same sense and benevolence which dictated adhesion to them among his old friends and acquaintance rendered it necessary to break them, when he was receiving strangers of the class I have described above at Abbotsford, he felt that their coming was the best homage they could pay to his celebrity, and that it would have been as uncourteous in him not to give them their fill of his talk as it would be in your every-day lord of manors to make his casual guests welcome indeed to his venison, but keep his grouse-shooting for his immediate allies and dependants.

Every now and then he received some stranger who was not indisposed to take his part in the *carving*, and how good-humouredly he surrendered the lion's share to any one that seemed to covet it—with what perfect placidity he submitted to be bored even by bores of the first water, must have excited the admiration of many besides the daily observers of his proceedings. I have heard a spruce Senior Wrangler lecture him for half an evening on the niceties of the Greek epigram, I have heard the poorest of all parliamentary blunderers try to detail to him the *pros* and *cons* of what he called the *Truck System*, and in either case the same bland eye watched the lips of the tormentor. But, with such ludicrous exceptions, Scott was the one object of the Abbotsford pilgrims, and evening followed evening only to show him exerting, for their amusement, more of animal spirits, to say nothing of intellectual vigour, than would have been considered by any other man in the company as sufficient for the whole expenditure of a week's existence. Yet this was not the chief marvel—he talked of things that interested himself, because he knew that by doing so he should give most pleasure to his guests, but how vast was the range of subjects on which he could talk with unaffected zeal, and with what admirable delicacy of instinctive politeness did he select his topic according to the peculiar history, study, pursuits, or social habits of the stranger! How beautifully he varied his style of letter-writing according to the character and situation of his multifarious correspondents, the reader has already been enabled to judge, but to carry the same system into practice *at sight*—to manage utter strangers, of many and widely different classes, in the same fashion and with the same effect—called for a quickness of observation and fertility of resource such as no description can convey the slightest notion of to those who never witnessed the thing for themselves, and all this was done without approach to the unmanly trickery of what is called *catching the tone* of the person one converses with. Scott took the subject on which he thought such a man or woman would like best to hear him

speaking—but not to handle it in their way, or in any way but what was completely and most simply his own,—not to flatter them by embellishing, with the illustration of his genius, the views and opinions which they were supposed to entertain, but to let his genius play out its own variations, for his own delight and theirs, as freely and easily, and with as endless a multiplicity of delicious novelties, as ever the magic of Beethoven or Mozart could fling over the few primitive notes of a village air.

It is the custom in some, perhaps in many country houses, to keep a register of the guests, and I have often regretted that nothing of the sort was ever attempted at Abbotsford. It would have been a curious record, especially if so contrived, as I have seen done, that the names of each day should, by their arrangement on the page, indicate the exact order in which the company sat at dinner. It would hardly, I believe, be too much to affirm, that Sir Walter Scott entertained, under his roof, in the course of the seven or eight brilliant seasons when his prosperity was at its height, as many persons of distinction in rank, in politics, in art, in literature, and in science, as the most princely nobleman of his age ever did in the like space of time.—I turned over, since I wrote the preceding sentence, Mr Lodge's compendium of the British Peerage, and on summing up the titles which suggested to *myself* some reminiscence of this kind, I found them nearly as one out of six—I fancy it is not beyond the mark to add, that of the eminent foreigners who visited our island within this period, a moiety crossed the Channel mainly in consequence of the interest with which his writings had invested Scotland, and that the hope of beholding the man under his own roof was the crowning motive with half that moiety. As for countrymen of his own, like him ennobled, in the higher sense of that word, by the display of their intellectual energies, if any one such contemporary can be pointed out as having crossed the Tweed, and yet not spent a day at Abbotsford, I shall be surprised.

It is needless to add that Sir Walter was familiarly known, long before the days I am speaking of, to almost all the nobility and higher gentry of Scotland, and consequently that there seldom wanted a fair proportion of them to assist him in doing the honours of his country. It is still more superfluous to say so respecting the heads of his own profession at Edinburgh. *Sibi et amicis*—Abbotsford was their villa whenever they pleased to resort to it, and few of them were ever absent from it long. He lived meanwhile in a constant interchange of easy visits with the gentlemen's families of Teviotdale and the Forest, so that, mixed up with his superfine admirers of the May fair breed, his staring worshippers from foreign parts, and his quick-witted coevals of the Parliament House, there was found generally some hearty homespun laird, with his dame, the young laird, a bashful bumpkin, perhaps, whose ideas did not soar beyond his gun and pointer, or perhaps a little pseudo-dandy, for whom the Kelso race-course and the Jedburgh ball were "life," and "the world," and not forgetting a brace of "Miss Rawbones," in whom, as their mamma prognosticated, some of Sir Walter's young Waverleys or Osbaldistones might peradventure discover a Flora MacIvor or a Die Vernon. To complete the *olla podrida*, we must remember that no old acquaintance, or family connexions, however remote their actual station or style of

manners from his own, were forgotten or lost sight of. He had some, even near relations, who, except when they visited him, rarely, if ever, found admittance to what the haughty dialect of the upper world is pleased to designate exclusively as *society*. These were welcome guests, let who might be under that roof; and it was the same with many a worthy citizen of Edinburgh, habitually moving in the obscurest of circles, who had been in the same class with Scott at the High School, or his fellow-apprentice when he was proud of earning threepence a page by the use of his pen. To dwell on nothing else, it was surely a beautiful perfection of real universal humanity and politeness, that could enable this great and good man to blend guests so multifarious in one group, and contrive to make them all equally happy with him, with themselves, and with each other.

I remember saying to William Allan one morning as the whole party mustered before the porch after breakfast, "A faithful sketch of what you at this moment see would be more interesting a hundred years hence than the grandest so-called historical picture that you will ever exhibit in Somerset House;" and my friend agreed with me so cordially, that I often wondered afterwards he had not attempted to realize the suggestion. The subject ought, however, to have been treated conjointly by him (or Wilkie) and Edwin Landseer. It was a clear, bright September morning, with a sharpness in the air that doubled the animating influence of the sunshine, and all was in readiness for a grand coursing match on Newark Hill. The only guest who had chalked out other sport for himself was the staunchest of anglers, Mr Rose, but he, too, was there on his *shelly*, armed with his salmon-rod and landing-net, and attended by his humorous squire Hives, and Charlie Purdie, a brother of Tom, in those days the most celebrated fisherman of the district. This little group of Waltonians, bound for Lord Somerville's preserve, remained lounging about to witness the start of the main cavalcade. Sir Walter, mounted on Sibyl, was marshalling the order of procession with a huge hunting-whip, and among a dozen frolicsome youths and maidens, who seemed disposed to laugh at all discipline, appeared, each on horseback, each as eager as the youngest sportsman in the troop, Sir Humphry Davy, Dr Wollaston, and the patriarch of Scottish *belles-lettres* Henry Mackenzie. The Man of Feeling, however, was persuaded with some difficulty to resign his steed for the present to his faithful negro follower, and to join Lady Scott in the sociable, until we should reach the ground of our *bathie*. Lairlaw, on a long-tailed wry Highlander, yeapt *Hoddin Grey*, which carried him nimbly and stoutly, although his feet almost touched the ground as he sat, was the adjutant. But the most picturesque figure was the illustrious inventor of the safety-lamp. He had come for his favourite sport of angling, and had been practising it successfully with Rose, his travelling companion, for two or three days preceding this, but he had not prepared for coursing fields, or had left Charlie Purdie's troop for Sir Walter's on a sudden thought, and his fisherman's costume—a brown hat with flexible brims, surrounded with line upon line of catgut, and innumerable fly-hooks, jack-boots worthy of a Dutch smuggler, and a fustian surtout dabbled with the blood of salmon—made a fine contrast with the smart jackets, white cord breeches, and well-polished jockey-boots of the less

distinguished cavaliers about him. Dr Wollaston was in black, and with his noble serene dignity of countenance might have passed for a sporting archbishop. Mr Mackenzie, at this time in the seventy-sixth year of his age, with a white hat turned up with green, green spectacles, green jacket, and long brown leathern gaiters buttoned upon his nether anatomy, wore a dog-whistle round his neck, and had all over the air of as resolute a devotee as the gay Captain of Huntly Burn. Tom Purdie and his subalterns had preceded us by a few hours with all the greyhounds that could be collected at Abbotsford, Darnick, and Melrose, but the giant Maida had remained as his master's orderly, and now gambolled about Sibyl Gray, barking for mere joy like a spaniel puppy.

The order of march had been all settled, and the sociable was just getting under weigh, when the *Lady Anne* broke from the line, screaming with laughter, and exclaimed, "Papa, papa, I knew you could never think of going without your pet." Scott looked round, and I rather think there was a blush as well as a smile upon his face, when he perceived a little black pig frisking about his pony, and evidently a self-elected addition to the party of the day. He tried to look stern and cracked his whip at the creature, but was in a moment obliged to join in the general cheers. Poor piggy soon found a strip round its neck, and was dragged into the background; Scott, watching the retreat, repeated with mock pathos the first verse of an old pastoral song—

"What will I do gin my hoggie* die?
My joy, my pride, my hoggie!
My only beast I had nie mae,
And woe ' but I was rogie!"

The cheers were redoubled, and the squadron moved on.

This pig had taken, nobody could tell how, a most sentimental attachment to Scott, and was constantly urging its pretensions to be admitted a regular member of his *tail* along with the greyhounds and terriers, but indeed, I remember him suffering another summer under the same sort of pertinacity on the part of an affectionate hen. I leave the explanation for philosophers, but such were the facts. I have too much respect for the vulgarly calumniated donkey, to name him in the same category of pets with the pig and the hen, but, a year or two after this time, my wife used to drive a couple of these animals in a little garden chair, and whenever her father appeared at the door of our cottage, we were sure to see Hannah Moore and Lady Morgan, as Anne Scott had wickedly christened them, trotting from their pasture to lay their noses over the paling, and as Washington Irving says of the old white-haired hedger with the Parisian snuff-box, "to have a pleasant crack wi' the laird."

But to return to our *chasse*. On reaching Newark Castle, we found Lady Scott, her eldest daughter, and the venerable Mackenzie all busily engaged in unpacking a basket that had been placed in their carriage, and arranging the luncheon it contained upon the mossy rocks overlooking the bed of the Yarrow. When such of the company as chose had partaken of this refection, the Man of Feeling resumed his pony, and all ascended the mountain, duly marshalled at proper distances, so as to

* *Hoy* signifies in the Scotch dialect, a young sheep that has never been shorn.

beat in a broad line over the heather, Sir Walter directing the movement from the right wing, towards Blackandro Davy, next to whom I chanced to be riding, laid his whip about the fern like an experienced hand, but cracked many a joke, too, upon his own jack-boots, and, surveying the long eager battalion of bushrangers, exclaimed, "Good heavens! is it thus that I visit the scenery of the Lay of the Last Minstrel?" He then kept muttering to himself, as his glowing eye, the finest and brightest that I ever saw, ran over the landscape, some of those beautiful lines from the *conclusion* of the Lay—

—"But still,
When summer smiled on sweet Bowhill,
And July's eve, with balmy breath,
Waved the blue bells on Newark heath,
When throistles sung in Hareheadshaw,
And corn was green on Carterhaugh,
And flourished, broad, Blackandro's oak,
The aged harper's soul awoke," &c

Mackenzie, spectaclled though he was, saw the first sitting hare, gave the word to slip the dogs, and spurred after them like a boy. All the seniors, indeed, did well so long as the course was upwards, but when puss took down the declivity, they halted and breathed themselves upon the knoll, cheering gaily, however, the young people, who dashed at full speed past and below them. Coursing on such a mountain is not like the same sport over a set of fine English pastures. There were gulfs to be avoided, and bogs enough to be threaded—many a stail nag stuck fast—many a bold rider measured his length among the peat-hags—and another stranger to the ground besides Davy plunged neck-deep into a treacherous well-head, which, till they were floundering in it, had borne all the appearance of a piece of delicate green turf. When Sir Humphry emerged from his involuntary bath, his habiliments garnished with mud, slime, and mangled water-eresses, Sir Walter received him with a triumphant *encore!* But the philosopher had his revenge, for joining soon afterwards in a brisk gallop, Scott put Sibyl Gray to a leap beyond her prowess, and lay humbled in a ditch, while Davy, who was better mounted, cleared it and him at a bound. Happily there was little damage done, but no one was sorry that the sociable had been detained at the foot of the hill.

I have seen Sir Humphry in many places, and in company of many different descriptions, but never to such advantage as at Abbotsford. His host and he delighted in each other, and the modesty of their mutual admiration was a memorable spectacle. Davy was by nature a poet, and Scott, though anything but a philosopher in the modern sense of that term, might, I think it very likely, have pursued the study of physical science with zeal and success, had he happened to fall in with such an instructor as Sir Humphry would have been to him, in his early life. Each strove to make the other talk—and they did so in turn more charmingly, than I ever heard either on any other occasion whatsoever. Scott in his romantic narratives touched a deeper chord of feeling than usual, when he had such a listener as Davy, and Davy, when induced to open his views upon any question of scientific interest in Scott's presence, did so with a degree of clear energetic eloquence, and with a flow

of imagery and illustration, of which neither his habitual tone of table-talk (least of all in London), nor any of his prose writings (except, indeed, the posthumous *Consolations of Travel*) could suggest an adequate notion. I say his prose writings—for who that has read his sublime quatrains on the doctrine of Spinoza can doubt that he might have united, if he had pleased, in some great didactic poem, the vigorous ratiocination of Dryden and the moral majesty of Wordsworth? I remember William Laidlaw whispering to me one night, when their “rapt talk” had kept the circle round the fire until long after the usual bed-time of Abbotsford, “Gude preserve us! this is a very superior occasion! Eh, sirs!” he added, cocking his eye like a bird, “I wonder if Shakespeare and Bacon ever met to screw ilk other up?”

Since I have touched on the subject of Sir Walter's autumnal diversions in these his later years, I may as well notice here two annual festivals, when sport was made his pretext for assembling his rural neighbours about him—days eagerly anticipated and fondly remembered by many. One was a solemn bout of salmon-fishing for the neighbouring gentry and their families, instituted originally, I believe, by Lord Somerville, but now, in his absence, conducted and presided over by the Sheriff Charles Purdie, already mentioned, had charge (partly as lessee) of the salmon fisheries for three or four miles of the Tweed, including all the water attached to the lands of Abbotsford, Gala, and Allwyn, and this festival had been established with a view, besides other considerations, of recompensing him for the attention he always bestowed on any of the lairds or their visitors that choose to fish, either from the banks or the boat, within his jurisdiction. His selection of the day, and other precautions, generally secured an abundance of sport for the great anniversary; and then the whole party assembled to regale on the newly caught prey, boiled, grilled, and roasted in every variety of preparation, beneath a grand old ash, adjoining Charlie's cottage at Boldside, on the northern margin of the Tweed, about a mile above Abbotsford. This banquet took place either in the day or later, according to circumstances, but it often lasted till the harvest moon shone on the lovely scene and its revellers. These formed groups that would have done no discredit to Watteau, and a still better hand has painted the background in the Introduction to the Monastery —“On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the crofts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cottages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Galashiels, which has risen into consideration, within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious eld, however, has tenanted the deserted grove with aerial beings, to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the fields of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and

detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectator might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

—“Queen of Fairy,
With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
Were dwelling in the place.”

Sometimes the evening closed with a “burning of the water;” and then the Sheriff, though now not so agile as when he practised that rough sport in the early times of Ashestiel, was sure to be one of the party in the boat—held a torch, or perhaps took the helm, and seemed to enjoy the whole thing as heartily as the youngest of his company—

“Tis blithe along the midnight tide,
With stalwart arm the boat to guide—
On high the dazzling blaze to rear,
And heedful plunge the barbed spear;
Rock, wood, and scur, emerging bright,
Fling on the stream their ruddy light,
And from the bank our band appears
Like Genu armed with fiery spears.”

The other “superior occasion” came later in the season; the 28th of October, the birthday of Sir Walter’s eldest son, was, I think, that usually selected for the *Abbotsford Hunt*. This was a coursing field on a large scale, including, with as many of the young gentry as pleased to attend, all Scott’s personal favourites among the yeomen and farmers of the surrounding country. The Sheriff always took the field, but latterly devolved the command upon his good friend Mr. John Usher, the ex-lord of Toffield; and he could not have had a more skilful or a better-humoured lieutenant. The hunt took place either on the moors above the Cauld-Shiels Loch, or over some of the hills on the estate of Gala, and we had commonly, ere we returned, hares enough to supply the wife of every farmer that attended with soup for a week following. The whole then dined at Abbotsford, the Sheriff in the chair, Adam Ferguson croupier, and Dominie Thomson, of course, chaplain. George, by the way, was himself an eager partaker in the preliminary sport; and now he would favour us with a grace, in Burns’ phrase, “as long as my arm,” beginning with thanks to the Almighty, who had given man dominion over the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, and exhorting on this text with so luculent a commentary, that Scott, who had been fumbling with his spoon long before he reached his Amen, could not help exclaiming as he sat down, “Well done, Mr. George! I think we’ve had everything but the view, holla!” The company, whose onset had been thus deferred, were seldom, I think, under thirty in number, and sometimes they exceeded forty. The feast was such as suited the occasion—a baron of beef, roasted, at the foot of the table, a salted round at the head, while tureens of hare-soup, hotchpotch, and cockeye-leekie extended down the centre, and such light articles as geese, turkeys, entire sucking pigs, a singed sheep’s head, and the unfailing haggis, were set forth by way of side-dishes. Blackcock and moorfowl, bushels of snipe, *black puddings*, *white puddings*, and pyramids of pancakes, formed

the second course. Ale was the favourite beverage during dinner, but there was plenty of port and sherry for those whose stomachs they suited. The quaighs of Glenlivet were filled brimful, and tossed off as if they held water. The wine-decanter made a few rounds of the table, but the hints for hot punch and toddy soon became clamorous. Two or three bowls were introduced, and placed under the supervision of experienced manufacturers—one of these being usually the Ettrick Shepherd—and then the business of the evening commenced in good earnest. The faces shone and glowed like those at Camacho's wedding, the chairman told his richest stories of old rural life, Lowland or Highland, Ferguson and humbler heroes fought their Peninsular battles o'er again, the stalwart Dandie Dinmonts lugged out their last winter's snow-storm, the parish scandal, perhaps, or the dexterous bargain of the Northumberland *tryste*, and every man was knocked down for the song that he sung best or took most pleasure in singing. Sheriff-Substitute Shortreed—(a cheerful hearty little man, with a sparkling eye and a most infectious laugh)—gave us *Dick o' the Cow*, or *Now Laddesdale has ridden a raid*, a weatherbeaten stiff-bearded veteran, Captain Ormiston, as he was called (though I doubt if his rank was recognized at the Horse Guards), had the primitive pastoral of *Cowdenknives* in sweet perfection, Hogg produced *The Women-folk*, or *The Kye comes hame*, and, in spite of many grinding notes, contrived to make everybody delighted, whether with the fun or the pathos of his ballad, the Melrose doctor sang in spirited style some of Moore's masterpieces; a couple of retired sailors joined in *Bould Admiral Duncan upon the high sea*, and the gallant croupier crowned the last bowl with *Ale, good ale, thou art my darling!* Imagine some smart Parisian *sarant*—some dreamy pedant of Halle or Heidelberg—a brace of staid young lords from Oxford or Cambridge, or perhaps their prim college tutors, planted here and there amidst these rustic wassailers—thus being their first vision of the author of *Marmion* and *Ivanhoe*, and he appearing as heartily at home in the scene as if he had been a veritable *Dandie* himself—his face radiant, his laugh gay as childhood, his chorus always ready. And so it proceeded until some worthy, who had fifteen or twenty miles to ride home, began to insinuate that his wife and bairns would be getting sorely anxious about the fords, and the Dimples and Hoddins were at last heard neighing at the gate, and it was voted that the hour had come for *doch an dorrach*—the stirrup-cup—to wit, a bumper all round of the unmitigated *mountain dew*. How they all contrived to get home in safety Heaven only knows—but I never heard of any serious accident except upon one occasion, when James Hogg made a bet at starting that he would leap over his wall-eyed pony as she stood, and broke his nose in this experiment of “o’err vaulting ambition.” One comely goodwife, far off among the hills, amused Sir Walter by telling him, the next time he passed her homestead after one of these jolly doings, what her husband's first words were when he alighted at his own door—“Ailie, my woman, I'm ready for my bed—and oh, lass” (he gallantly added), “I wish I could sleep for a townout, for there's only as thing in this world worth living for, and that's the Abbotsford hunt!”

It may well be supposed that the President of the Boldside Festival and the Abbotsford Hunt did not omit the good old custom of the *Kirn*.

Every November before quitting the country for Edinburgh, he gave a *harvest-home*, on the most approved model of former days, to all the peasantry on his estate, their friends and kindred, and as many poor neighbours besides as his barn could hold. Here old and young danced from sunset to sunrise, John of Skye's bagpipe being relieved at intervals by the violin of some "Wandering Willie;" and the laird and all his family were present during the early part of the evening, he and his wife to distribute the contents of the first tub of whiskey punch, and his young people to take their due share in the endless reels and hornpipes of the earthen floor. As Mr. Morritt has said of him as he appeared at Laird Nipsey's kirk of earlier days, "to witness the cordiality of his reception might have unbent a misanthrope." He had his private joke for every old wife or "gausie carle," his arch compliment for the ear of every bounny lass, and his hand and his blessing for the head of every little *Eppie Dandle* from Abbotstown or Broomylees.

In the September of 1820, Longman, in conjunction with Constable, published *The Abbot*,—the continuation, to a certain extent, of *The Monastery*, of which I barely mentioned the appearance under the preceding March. I had nothing of any consequence to add to the information which the subsequent introduction affords us respecting the composition and fate of the former of these novels. It was considered as a failure, the first of the series on which any such sentence was pronounced, nor have I much to allege in favour of the *White Lady of Avenel*, generally criticised as the primary blot, or of Sir Percy Shafton, who was loudly, though not quite so generally, condemned. In either case, considered separately, he seems to have erred from dwelling (in the German taste) on materials that might have done very well for a rapid sketch. The phantom with whom we have leisure to become familiar is sure to fail—even the *Witch of Endor* is contented with a momentary appearance and five syllables of the shade she evokes. And we may say the same of any grotesque absurdity in human manners. Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakespeare introduces his Euphuism, though actually the prevalent humour of the hour when he was writing. But perhaps these errors might have attracted little notice, had the novelist been successful in finding some reconciling medium capable of giving consistence and harmony to his naturally incongruous materials. "These," said one of his ablest critics, "are joined, but they refuse to blend—nothing can be more poetical in conception, and sometimes in language, than the fiction of the *White Maid of Avenel*, but when this ethereal personage, who rides on the cloud which 'for Arahya is bound'—who is

"Something between heaven and hell,
Something that neither stood nor fell,"—

"whose existence is linked by an awful and mysterious destiny to the fortunes of a decaying family, when such a being as this descends to clownish pranks, and promotes a frivolous jest about a tailor's bodkin, the course of our sympathies is rudely arrested, and we feel as if the author had put upon us the old-fashioned pleasantry of selling a bargain."*

† Adolphus's Letters to Heber, p. 13.

The beautiful natural scenery, and the sterling Scotch characters and manners introduced in *The Monastery* are, however, sufficient to redeem even these mistakes, and, indeed, I am inclined to believe that it will ultimately occupy a securer place than some romances enjoying hitherto a far higher reputation, in which he makes no use of *Scottish* materials.

Sir Walter himself thought well of *The Abbot* when he had finished it. When he sent me a complete copy, I found on a slip of paper at the beginning of Vol. I. these two lines from *Tom Crib's Memorial to Congress*,—

“Up he rose in a funk, lapped a toothful of brandy,
And to it again!—any odds upon Sandy!”—

and whatever ground he had been supposed to lose in *The Monastery*, part at least of it was regained by this tale, and especially by its most graceful and pathetic portraiture of Mary Stuart. “*The Castle of Lochleven*,” says the Chief Commissioner Adam, “is seen at every turn from the northern side of Blair-Adam. This castle, renowned and attractive above all the others in my neighbourhood, became an object of much increased attention and a theme of constant conversation after the author of *Waverley* had—by his inimitable power of delineating character, by his creative poetic fancy in representing scenes of varied interest, and by the splendour of his romantic descriptions—infused a more diversified and a deeper tone of feeling into the history of Queen Mary’s captivity and escape.”

I have introduced this quotation from a little book privately printed for the amiable Judge’s own family and familiar friends, because Sir Walter owned to myself at the time that the idea of *The Abbot* had arisen in his mind during a visit to Blair-Adam. In the pages of the tale itself, indeed, the beautiful localities of that estate are distinctly mentioned, with an allusion to the virtues and manners that adorn its mansion, such as must have been intended to satisfy the possessor (if he could have had any doubts on the subject) as to the authorship of those novels.

The Right Honourable William Adam—(who must pardon my mentioning him here as the only man I ever knew that rivalled Sir Walter Scott in uniform graciousness of *bonhomie* and gentleness of humour)—was appointed, in 1815, to the Presidency of the Court for Jury Trial in Civil Cases, then instituted in Scotland, and he thenceforth spent a great part of his time at his paternal seat in Kinross-shire. Here, about midsummer, 1816, he received a visit from his near relation William Clerk, Adam Ferguson, his hereditary friend and especial favourite, and their lifelong intimate Scott. They remained with him for two or three days, in the course of which they were all so much delighted with their host, and he with them, that it was resolved to reassemble the party, with a few additions, at the same season of every following year. This was the origin of the Blair-Adam Club, the regular members of which were in number nine—viz, the four already named, the Chief Commissioner’s son, Admiral Sir Charles Adam, his son-in-law, the late Mr Anstruther Thomson of Charleton, in Fifeshire, Mr Thomas Thomson, the Deputy Register of Scotland, his brother, the Rev John Thomson, minister of

Duddingston, who, though a most diligent and affectionate parish priest, found leisure to make himself one of the first masters of the British school of landscape painting, and the Right Hon Sir Samuel Shepherd, who, after filling with high distinction the office of Attorney-General in England, became Chief Baron of the Court of Exchequer in Scotland, shortly after the third anniversary of this brotherhood, into which he was immediately welcomed with unanimous cordiality. They usually contrived to meet on a Friday, spent the Saturday in a ride to some scene of historical interest within an easy distance, enjoyed a quiet Sunday at home—"duly attending divine worship at the Kirk of Cleish (not Cleishbotham)"—gave Monday morning to another antiquarian excursion, and returned to Edinburgh in time for the Courts of Tuesday. From 1816 to 1831 inclusive, Sir Walter was a constant attendant at these meetings. He visited in this way Castle Campbell, Magus Moor, Falkland, Dunfermline, St Andrews, and many other scenes of ancient celebrity, to one of those trips we must ascribe his dramatic sketch of *Macduff's Cross*, and to that of the dog days of 1819 we owe the weightier obligation of *The Abbot*.

I expect an easy forgiveness for introducing from the *liber rarissimus* of Blair-Adam the page that belongs to that particular meeting—which, though less numerous than usual, is recorded as having been "most pleasing and delightful" "There were," writes the President, "only five of us: the Chief Baron, Sir Walter, Mr Clerk, Charles Adam, and myself. The weather was sultry almost beyond bearing. We did not stir beyond the bounds of the pleasure-ground, indeed, not far from the vicinity of the house, wandering from one shady place to another; lolling upon the grass, or sitting upon prostrate trees, not yet carried away by the purchaser. Our conversation was constant, though tranquil, and what might be expected from Mr Clerk, who is a superior converser, and whose mind is stored with knowledge, and from Sir Walter Scott, who has let the public know what his powers are! Our talk was of all sorts (except of beeves).

The Chief Commissioner adds the following particulars in his appendix "Our return from Blair-Adam (after the first meeting of the club) was very early on a Tuesday morning, that we might reach the Courts by nine o'clock. An occurrence took place near the Hawe's Inn, which left little doubt upon my mind that Sir Walter Scott was the author of *Waverley*, of *Guy Mannering*, and of the *Antiquary*, his only novels then published. The morning was prodigiously fine, and the sea as smooth as glass. Sir Walter and I were standing on the beach, enjoying the prospect, the other gentlemen were not come from the boat. The porpoises were rising in great numbers, when Sir Walter said to me, "Look at them, how they are showing themselves, what fine fellows they are! I have the greatest respect for them. I would as soon kill a man as a phoca." I could not conceive that the same idea could occur to two men respecting this animal, and set down that it could only be Sir Walter Scott who made the phoca have the better of the battle with the *Antiquary's* nephew, Captain M^cIntyre.

"Soon after, another occurrence quite confirmed me as to the authorship of the novels. On that visit to Blair-Adam, in course of conversation,

I mentioned an anecdote about Wilkie, the author of the *Epigoniad*, who was but a formal poet, but whose conversation was most amusing and full of fancy. Having heard much of him in my family, where he had been very intimate, I went, when quite a lad, to St Andrews, where he was a professor, for the purpose of visiting him. I had scarcely let him know who I was, when he said, 'Mr William, were you ever in this place before?' I said no. 'Then, sir, you must go and look at Regulus' Tower,—no doubt you will have something of an eye of an architect about you, walk up to it at an angle, advance and recede until you get to see it at its proper distance, and come back and tell me whether you ever saw anything so beautiful in building till I saw that tower, and studied it, I thought the beauty of architecture had consisted in curly-wurles, but now I find it consists in symmetry and proportion.' In the following winter *Rob Roy* was published, and there I read that the cathedral of Glasgow was 'a respectable Gothic structure, without any curly-wurles.'

"But what confirmed, and was certainly meant to disclose to me the author (and that in a very elegant manner), was the mention of the *Kiery Craggs*, a picturesque piece of scenery in the grounds of Blair-Adam, as being in the vicinity of Kelty Bridge, the *howf* of Auchtermuehty, the Kinross carrier.

"It was only an intimate friend of the family, in the habit of coming to Blair-Adam, who could know anything of the *Kiery Craggs* or its name, and both the scenery and the name had attractions for Sir Walter.

"At our first meeting after the publication of *The Abbot*, when the party was assembled on the top of the rock, the Chief Baron Shepherd, looking Sir Walter full in the face, and stamping his staff on the ground, said, 'Now, Sir Walter, I think we be upon the top of the *Kiery Craggs*.' Sir Walter preserved profound silence, but there was a conscious looking down, and a considerable elongation of his upper lip."

For reasons, as we have seen, connected with the affairs of the Ballantynes, Messrs Longman published the first edition of *The Monastery*, and similar circumstances induced Sir Walter to associate this house with that of Constable in the succeeding novel. Constable disliked its title, and would fain have had *The Nunnery* instead, but Scott stuck to his *Abbot*. The bookseller grumbled a little, but was soothed by the author's reception of his request that Queen Elizabeth might be brought into the field in his next romance, as a companion to the Mary Stuart of *The Abbot*. Scott would not, indeed, indulge him with the choice of the particular period of Elizabeth's reign, indicated in the proposed title of *The Armada*, but expressed his willingness to take up his own old favourite, the legend of Menkle's ballad. He wished to call the novel, like the ballad, *Cumnor Hall*, but in further deference to Constable's wishes substituted *Kenilworth*. John Ballantyne objected to this title, and told Constable the result would be "something worthy of the kennel," but Constable had all reason to be satisfied with the child of his christening. His partner, Mr. Cadell, says, "His vanity boiled over so much at this time, on having his suggestion gone into, that when in his high moods he used to stalk up and down his room, and exclaim, 'By G——, I am all but the author of the *Waverley Novels*!'" Constable's bibliographical knowledge, however, it is but fair to say, was really of most essential er-

vice to Scott upon many of these occasions, and his letter (now before me) proposing the subject of *The Armada*, furnished the novelist with such a catalogue of materials for the illustration of the period as may, probably enough, have called forth some very energetic expression of thankfulness.

Scott's kindness secured for John Ballantyne the usual interest in the profits of *Kenilworth*, the last of his great works in which this friend was to have any concern. I have already mentioned the obvious drooping of his health and strength, and a document, to be introduced presently, will show that John himself had occasional glimpses, at least, of his danger, before the close of 1819. Nevertheless, his spirits continued, at the time of which I am now treating, to be in general as high as ever, nay, it was now, after his maladies had taken a very serious shape, and it was hardly possible to look on him without anticipating a speedy termination of his career, that the gay, hopeful spirit of the shattered and trembling invalid led him to plunge into a new stream of costly indulgence. It was an amiable point in his character that he had always retained a tender fondness for his native place. He had now taken up the ambition of rivalling his illustrious friend, in some sort, by providing himself with a summer retirement amidst the scenery of his boyhood; and it need not be doubted, at the same time, that in erecting a villa at Kelso, he anticipated and calculated on substantial advantages from its vicinity to Abbotsford.

One fine day of this autumn I accompanied Sir Walter to inspect the progress of this edifice, which was to have the title of *Walton Hall*. John had purchased two or three old houses of two stories in height, with notched gables and thatched roofs, near the end of the long, original street of Kelso, and not far from the gateway of the Duke of Roxburgh's magnificent park, with their small gardens and paddocks running down to the margin of the Tweed. He had already fitted up convenient bachelor's lodgings in one of the primitive tenements, and converted the others into a goodly range of stabling, and was now watching the completion of his new *corps de logis* behind, which included a handsome entrance-hall, or saloon, destined to have old Piscator's bust on a stand in the centre, and to be embellished all round with emblems of his sport. Behind this were spacious rooms overlooking the little *pleasance*, which was to be laid out somewhat in the Italian style, with ornamental steps, a fountain, and *jet d'eau*, and a broad terrace hanging over the river, and commanding an extensive view of perhaps the most beautiful landscape in Scotland. In these new dominions John received us with pride and hilarity, and we then walked with him over this pretty town, lounged away an hour among the ruins of the abbey, and closed our perambulation with *the Garden*, where Scott had spent some of the happiest of his early summers, and where he pointed out with sorrowful eyes the site of the platanus, under which he first read Percy's *Reliques*. Returning to John's villa, we dined gaily, *al fresco*, by the side of his fountain, and after not a few bumps to the prosperity of *Walton Hall*, he mounted *Old Mortality*, and escorted us for several miles on our ride homewards. It was this day that, overflowing with kindly zeal, Scott revived one of the long-forgotten projects of their early connection in business, and

offered his services as editor of a *Novelist's Library*, to be printed and published for the sole benefit of his host. The offer was eagerly embraced, and when two or three mornings afterwards John returned Sir Walter's visit, he had put into his hands the MS. of that admirable *Life of Fielding*, which was followed at brief intervals, as the arrangements of the projected work required, by others of Smollett, Richardson, Defoe, Sterne, Johnson, Goldsmith, Le Sage, Horace Walpole, Cumberland, Mrs Radcliffe, Charles Johnstone, Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, and Robert Bage. The publication of the first volume of "*Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*" did not take place, however, until February, 1821, and the series was closed soon after the proprietor's death in the ensuing summer. In spite of the charming prefaces in which Scott combines all the graces of his easy narrative with a perpetual stream of deep and gentle wisdom in commenting on the tempers and fortunes of his best predecessors in novel literature, and also with expositions of his own critical views, which prove how profoundly he had investigated the principles and practice of those masters before he struck out a new path for himself, in spite of these delightful and valuable essays, the publication was not prosperous. Constable, after Ballantyne's death, would willingly have resumed the scheme. But Scott had by that time convinced himself that it was in vain to expect much success for a collection so bulky and miscellaneous, and which must of necessity include a large proportion of matter condemned by the purity, whether real or affected, of modern taste. He could hardly have failed to perceive, on reflection, that his own novels, already constituting an extensive library of fiction, in which no purist could pretend to discover danger for the morals of youth, had in fact superseded the works of less straitlaced days in the only permanently and solidly profitable market for books of this order. He at all events declined Constable's proposition for renewing and extending this attempt. What he did was done gratuitously for John Ballantyne's sake, and I have dwelt on it thus long, because, as the reader will perceive by-and-by, it was so done during, with one exception, the very busiest period of Scott's literary life.

Scott placed his second son (at this time in his fifteenth year) under the care of the Rev John Williams, who had been my intimate friend and companion at Oxford, with a view of preparing him for that University. Mr Williams was then vicar of Lampeter, in Cardiganshire, and the high satisfaction with which his care of Charles Scott inspired Sir Walter induced several other Scotch gentlemen of distinction by-and-by to send their sons also to his Welsh parsonage, the result of which northern connections was important to the fortunes of one of the most accurate and extensive scholars and most skilful teachers of the present time.

The late Sir James Hall of Dunglass resigned in November, 1820, the Presidency of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and the Fellows, though they had on all former occasions selected a man of science to fill that post, paid Sir Walter the compliment of unanimously requesting him to be Sir James's successor in it. He felt and expressed a natural hesitation about accepting this honour—which at first sight seemed like invading the proper department of another order of scholars. But when it was urged upon him that the Society is really a double one—embracing a section for

literature as well as one of science—and that it was only due to the former to let it occasionally supply the chief of the whole body, Scott acquiesced in the flattering proposal; and his gentle skill was found effective, so long as he held the chair, in maintaining and strengthening the tone of good feeling and good manners which can alone render the meetings of such a society either agreeable or useful. The new President himself soon began to take a lively interest in many of their discussions—those, at least, which pointed to any discovery of practical use, and he by-and-bye added some eminent men of science, with whom his acquaintance had hitherto been slight, to the list of his most valued friends. I may mention in particular Dr (Sir David) Brewster.

Sir Walter also alludes to an institution of a far different description, that called "The Celtic Society of Edinburgh," a club established mainly for the patronage of ancient Highland manners and customs, especially the use of "the Garb of Old Gaul"—though part of their funds have always been applied to the really important object of extending education in the wilder districts of the north. At their annual meetings Scott was, as may be supposed, a regular attendant. He appeared, as in duty bound, in the costume of the fraternity, and was usually followed by "John of Skye," in a still more complete, or rather incomplete, style of equipment.

In the course of January, 1821, appeared *Kenilworth*, in three vols, post 8vo, like *Ivanhoe*, which form was adhered to with all the subsequent novels of the series. *Kenilworth* was one of the most successful of them all at the time of publication, and it continues, and, I doubt not, will ever continue, to be placed in the very highest rank of prose fiction. The rich variety of character, and scenery, and incident in this novel, has never indeed been surpassed, nor, with the one exception of the *Bride of Lammermoor*, has Scott bequeathed us a deeper and more affecting tragedy than that of *Amy Robsart*.

Before the end of January, 1821, Scott went to London, at the request of the other Clerks of Session, that he might watch over the progress of an Act of Parliament designed to relieve them from a considerable part of their drudgery, in attesting recorded deeds by signature, and his stay was prolonged until near the beginning of the summer term of his Court. His letters while in London are chiefly to his own family and on strictly domestic topics. Cornet Scott travelled for some time in Germany, with a view to his improvement in the science of his profession. He afterwards spent a brief period, for the same purpose, in the Royal Military College of Sandhurst, and ere long he obtained a commission as lieutenant in the 15th or King's Hussars—a regiment which has uniformly, I believe, been ranked among the most distinguished in the service, and in which his father lived to see him Major.

During this visit to London Sir Walter was released from considerable anxiety on account of his daughter Sophia, whom he had left in a weak state of health at Edinburgh, by the intelligence of her safe accouchement of a boy—John Hugh Lockhart, the "Hugh Littlejohn" of the *Tales of a Grandfather*. The approaching marriage of Captain, now Sir Adam Ferguson, may be classed with these objects of family interest, and that event was the source of unmixed satisfaction to Scott, as it did not inter-

rupt his enjoyment of his old friend's society in the country, for the Captain, though he then pitched a tent for himself, did so at a very short distance from Huntly Burn

On the 4th of June, Scott being then on one of his short sessional visits to Abbotsford, received the painful intelligence that his friend John Ballantyne's maladies had begun to assume an aspect of serious and even immediate danger. The elder brother made the communication in these terms —

"DEAR SIR,—

"I have this morning had a most heart-breaking letter from poor John, from which the following is an extract. You will judge how it has affected me, who, with all his peculiarities of temper, love him very much. 'He says —

'A spitting of blood has commenced, and you may guess the situation into which I am plunged. We are all accustomed to consider death as certainly inevitable, but his obvious approach is assuredly the most detestable and abhorrent feeling to which human nature can be subject.'

"This is truly doleful. There is something in it more absolutely bitter to my heart than what I have otherwise suffered. I look back to my mother's peaceful rest, and to my infant's blessedness—if life be not the extinguishable worthless spark which I cannot think it—but here, cut off in the very middle of life, with good means and strong powers of enjoying it, and nothing but reluctance and repining at the close—I say the truth when I say that I would joyfully part with my right arm to avert the approaching result. Pardon this, dear sir, my heart and soul are heavy within me. With the deepest respect and gratitude, "J B"

At the date of this letter the invalid was in Roxburghshire, but he came to Edinburgh a day or two afterwards, and died there on the 16th of the same month. I accompanied Sir Walter when one of their last interviews took place, and John's death-bed was a thing not to be forgotten. We sat by him for perhaps an hour, and I think half that space was occupied with his predictions of a speedy end, and details of his last will, which he had just been executing, and which lay on his coverlid, the other half being given, five minutes or so at a time, to questions and remarks, which intimated that the hope of life was still flickering before him—nay, that his interest in all its concerns remained eager. The proof-sheets of a volume of his *Novelist's Library* lay also by his pillow, and he passed from them to his will, and then back to them, as by jerks and starts the unwonted veil of gloom closed upon his imagination, or was withdrawn again. He had, as he said, left his great friend and patron £2,000 towards the completion of the new library at Abbotsford—and the spirit of the auctioneer virtuoso flashed up as he began to describe what would, he thought, be the best style and arrangement of the bookshelves. He was interrupted by an agony of asthma, which left him with hardly any signs of life, and ultimately he did expire in a fit of the same kind. Scott was visibly and profoundly shaken by this scene and its sequel. As we stood together a few days afterwards, while they were smoothing the turf over John's remains in the Canongate Churchyard, the heavens, which had been dark and slaty, cleared up suddenly, and the midsummer

sun shone forth in its strength Scott, ever awake to the "skiey influences," cast his eye along the overhanging line of the Calton Hill, with its gleaming walls and towers, and then turning to the grave again, "I feel," he whispered in my ear, "I feel as if there would be less sunshine for me from this day forth."

As we walked homewards, Scott told me, among other favourable *traits* of his friend, one little story which I must not omit. He remarked one day to a poor student of divinity attending his auction, that he looked as if he were in bad health. The young man assented with a sigh. "Come," said Ballantyne, "I think I ken the secret of a sort of diast that would relieve you—particularly," he added, handing him a cheque for £5 or £10, "particularly, my dear, if taken upon an empty stomach."

John died in his elder brother's house in St John Street, a circumstance which it gives me pleasure to record, as it confirms the impression of their affectionate feelings towards each other at this time. Their confidence and cordiality had undergone considerable interruption in the latter part of John's life, but the close was in all respects fraternal.

A year and half before John's exit, namely, on the last day of 1819, he happened to lay his hand on an old pocket-book, which roused his reflections, and he filled two or three of its pages with a brief summary of the most active part of his life, which I think it due to his character, as well as Sir Walter Scott's, to transcribe in this place.

"31st Dec, 1819 In moving a bed from the fireplace to-day upstairs, I found in old memorandum book, which enables me to trace the following recollections of this day, the last of the year

"1801 A shopkeeper in Kelso, at this period my difficulties had not begun in business, was well, happy, and 27 years old, new then in a connection which afterwards gave me great pain, but can never be forgotten

"1802 28 old In Kelso as before, could scarcely be happier; hunted, shot, kept *****'s company, and neglected business, the fruits whereof I soon found.

"1803 29 Still fortunate, and happy from same cause. James in Edinburgh thriving as a printer. When I was *enraged* at home, visited him. Business neglected every way

"1804 30 Material change, getting into difficulties, all wrong, and changes in every way approaching

"1805 31 All consummated, health miserable all summer, and * * * designated in an erased mem, *the scoundrel*. I yet recollect the cause—can I ever forget it? My furniture, goods, &c., sold at Kelso, previous to my going to Edinburgh to become my brother's clerk, whither I *did* go, for which God be praised eternally, on Friday, 3rd January, 1806, on £200 a year. My effects at Kelso, with labour, paid my debts, and left me penniless

"From this period till 1808 (34) I continued in this situation, then the scheme of a bookselling concern in Hanover Street was adopted, which I was to manage, it was £300 a year, and one-fourth of the profits besides

"1809 35 Already the business in Hanover Street getting into difficulty from our ignorance of its nature, and most extravagant and foolish advances from its funds to the printing concern. I ought to have resisted this, but I was thoughtless, although not young, or rather reckless, and lived on as long as I could make ends meet

"1810 36 Bills increasing, the destructive system of accommodations adopted

"1811 37 Bills increased to a most fearful degree. Sir Wm Forbes and Co shut their account. No bank would discount with us, and everything leading to irretrievable failure.

"1812 38 The first partner stepped in, at a crisis so tremendous that it yet shakes my soul to think of it. By the most consummate wisdom, and resolution, and unheard of exertions, he put things in a train that finally (so early as 1817) paid even himself (who ultimately became the sole creditor of the house) *in full*, with a balance of a thousand pounds.

"1813 39 In business as a literary auctioneer in Prince's Street, from which period to the present I have got gradually forward, both in that line and as third of a partner of the works of the author of *Waverley*, so that I am now, at 45, worth about (I owe £2,000) £5,000, with however, alas! many changes—my strong constitution much broken, my father and mother dead, and James estranged—the chief enjoyment and glory of my life being the possession of the friendship and confidence of the greatest of men."

In communicating John's death to the Cornet, Sir Walter says, "I have had a very great loss in poor John Ballantyne, who is gone, after a long illness. He persisted to the very last in endeavouring to take exercise, in which he was often imprudent, and was up and dressed the very morning before his death. In his will the grateful creature has left me a legacy of £2,000, life-rented, however, by his wife, and the rest of his little fortune goes betwixt his two brothers. I shall miss him very much, both in business, and as an easy and lively companion, who was eternally active and obliging in whatever I had to do."

I am sorry to take leave of John Ballantyne with the remark that his last will was a document of the same class with too many of his *states* and *calendars*. So far from having £2,000 to bequeath to Sir Walter, he died as he had lived, ignorant of the situation of his affairs, and deep in debt.

The coronation of George IV, preparations for which were (as has been seen) in active progress by March, 1820, had been deferred, in consequence of the unhappy affair of the Queen's trial. The 19th of July, 1821, was now announced for this solemnity, and Sir Walter resolved to be among the spectators. It occurred to him that if the Ettrick Shepherd were to accompany him, and produce some memorial of the scene likely to catch the popular ear in Scotland, good service might thus be done to the cause of loyalty, but this was not his only consideration. Hogg had married a handsome and most estimable young woman, a good deal above his own original rank in life, the year before, and expecting with her a dowry of £1,000, he had forthwith revived the grand ambition of an earlier day, and became a candidate for an extensive farm on the Buccleuch estate, at a short distance from Altrive Lake. Various friends, supposing his worldly circumstances to be much improved, had supported his application, and Lord Montagu had received it in a manner for which the Shepherd's letters to Scott express much gratitude. Misfortune pursued the Shepherd—the unforeseen bankruptcy of his wife's father interrupted the stocking of the sheep-walk, and the arable part of the new possession was sadly mismanaged by himself. Scott hoped that a visit to London, and a coronation poem, or pamphlet, might end in some pension or post that would relieve these difficulties, and he wrote to Hogg, urging him to come to Edinburgh, and embark with him for the great city. Not doubting that this proposal would be eagerly accepted, he, when writing to Lord Sidmouth to ask a place for himself in the Hall and Abbey of Westminster, mentioned that Hogg was to be his companion, and begged

suitable accommodation for him also Lord Sidmouth, being overwhelmed with business connected with the approaching pageant, answered by the pen of the Under-Secretary of State, Mr Hobhouse, that Sir Walter's wishes, both as to himself and the Shepherd, should be gratified, *provided* they would both dine with him the day after the coronation, in Richmond Park, "where," says the letter before me, "his lordship will invite the Duke of York and a few other Jacobites to meet you" All this being made known to the tenant of Mount Benger, he wrote to Scott, as he says, "with the tear in his eye," to signify, that if he went to London, he must miss attending the great annual Border fair, held on St. Boswell's Green, in Roxburghshire, on the 18th of every July, and that his absence from that meeting so soon after entering upon business as a store farmer would be considered by his new compeers as highly imprudent and discreditable "In short," James concludes, "the thing is impossible But as there is no man in his Majesty's dominions admires his great talents for government, and the energy and dignity of his administration, so much as I do, I will write something at home, and endeavour to give it you before you start" The Shepherd probably expected that these pretty compliments would reach the royal ear, but however that may have been, his own Muse turned a deaf ear to him—at least, I never heard of anything that he wrote on this occasion

Scott embarked without him, on board a new steamship called the *City of Edinburgh*, which, as he suggested to the master, ought rather to have been christened the *New Reekie*

At the close of this brilliant scene [of the coronation] Scott received a mark of homage to his genius which delighted him not less than Laird Nippy's reverence for *the Sheriff's Knoll*, and the Birmingham cutler's dear acquisition of his signature on a visiting ticket Missing his carriage, he had to return home on foot from Westminster, after the banquet—that is to say, between two and three o'clock in the morning, when he and a young gentleman, his companion, found themselves locked in the crowd, somewhere near Whitehall, and the bustle and tumult were such that his friend was afraid some accident might happen to the lame limb A space for the dignitaries was kept clear at that point by the Scots Greys Sir Walter addressed a serjeant of this celebrated regiment, begging to be allowed to pass by him into the open ground in the middle of the street The man answered shortly that his orders were strict—that the thing was impossible While he was endeavouring to persuade the serjeant to relent, some new wave of turbulence approached from behind, and his young companion exclaimed in a loud voice, "Take care, Sir Walter Scott, take care!" The stalwart dragoon, on hearing the name, said, "What! Sir Walter Scott? He shall get through anyhow!" He then addressed the soldiers near him—"Make room, men, for Sir Walter Scott, our illustrious countryman!" The men answered, "Sir Walter Scott! God bless him!" and he was in a moment within the guarded line of safety

I shall now take another extract from the *memoranda*, with which I have been favoured by my friend Allan Cunningham After the particulars formerly quoted about Scott's sitting to Chantrey in the spring of 1820, he proceeds as follows.—

"I saw Sir Walter again, when he attended the coronation, in 1821. In the meantime his bust had been wrought in marble, and the sculptor desired to take the advantage of his visit to communicate such touches of expression or lineament as the new material rendered necessary. This was done with a happiness of eye and hand almost magical for five hours did the poet sit, or stand, or walk, while Chantrey's chisel was passed again and again over the marble, adding something at every touch.

"Well, Allan," he said, when he saw me at this last sitting, "were you at the coronation? it was a splendid sight." "No, Sir Walter," I answered, "places were dear and ill to get. I am told it was a magnificent scene, but having seen the procession of King Crispin at Dumfries, I was satisfied. I said this with a smile. Scott took it as I meant it, and laughed heartily. 'That's not a bit better than Hogg,' he said. 'He stood balancing the matter whether to go to the coronation or the fair of Saint Boswell—and the fair carried it.'

"During this conversation, Mr Bolton the engineer came in. Something like a cold acknowledgment passed between the poet and him. On his passing into an inner room, Scott said, 'I am afraid Mr Bolton has not forgot a little passage that once took place between us. We met in a public company, and in reply to the remark of some one, he said, "That's like the old saying,—in every corner of the world you will find a Scot, a rat, and a Newcastle grindstone." This touched my Scotch spirit, and I said, "Mr Bolton you ought to have added, *and a Birmingham button*." There was a laugh at this, and Mr Bolton replied, "We make something better in Birmingham than buttons—we make steam-engines, sir."

"I like Bolton," thus continued Sir Walter, "he is a brave man, and who can dislike the brave?—He showed this on a remarkable occasion. He had engaged to coin for some foreign prince a large quantity of gold. This was found out by some desperadoes, who resolved to rob the premises, and as a preliminary step tried to bribe the porter. The porter was an honest fellow,—he told Bolton that he was offered a hundred pounds to be blind and deaf next night. Take the money, was the answer, and I shall protect the place. Midnight came, the gates opened as if by magic. the interior doors, secured with patent locks, opened as of their own accord, and three men with dark lanterns entered and went straight to the gold. Bolton had prepared some flax steeped in turpentine—he dropt fire upon it, a sudden light filled all the place, and with his assistants he rushed forward on the robbers, the leader saw in a moment he was betrayed, turned on the porter, and shooting him dead, burst through all obstruction, and, with an ingot of gold in his hand, scaled the wall and escaped."

"That is quite a romance in robbing," I said, and I had nearly said more, for the cavern scene and death of Meg Merrilees rose in my mind,—perhaps the mind of Sir Walter was taking the direction of the Solway too, for he said, 'How long have you been from Nithsdale?' 'A dozen years.' 'Then you will remember it well. I was a visitor there in my youth, my brother was at Closeburn school, and there I found Creehope Linn, a scene ever present to my fancy. It is at once fearful and beautiful. The stream jumps down from the moorlands, saws its way into the freestone rock of a hundred feet deep, and, in escaping to the plain, performs

a thousand vagaries. In one part it has actually shaped out a little chapel, the peasants call it the Sutors' Chair. There are sculptures on the sides of the linn too, not such as Mr Chantrey casts, but etchings scraped in with a knife, perhaps, or a harrow-tooth. Did you ever hear,' said Sir Walter, 'of Patrick Maxwell; who, taken prisoner by the king's troops, escaped from them on his way to Edinburgh, by flinging himself into that dreadful linn on Moffat Water, called the Douglasses' Beef-tub?' 'Frequently,' I answered, 'the country abounds with anecdotes of those days, the popular feeling sympathizes with the poor Jacobites, and has recorded its sentiments in many a tale and many a verse.' 'The Ettrick Shepherd has collected not a few of those things,' said Scott, 'and I suppose many snatches of song may yet be found.' C 'I have gathered many such things myself, Sir Walter, and as I still propose to make a collection of all Scottish songs of poetic merit, I shall work up many of my stray verses and curious anecdotes in the notes.' S 'I am glad that you are about such a thing, any help which I can give you, you may command, ask me any questions, no matter how many, I shall answer them if I can. Don't be timid in your selection, our ancestors fought boldly, spoke boldly, and sang boldly too. I can help you to an old characteristic ditty not yet in print

"There dwelt a man into the wast,
And O gin he was cruel,
For on his bridal night at o'en
He gat up and grit for gruel
They brought to him a gude sheep's head,
A bason, and a towel,
Gir take thir whim-whirms far frae me,
I winna want my gruel."

"C 'I never heard that verse before, the hero seems related to the bridegroom of Nithsdale * * * *

"S 'A cowardly loon enough. I know of many crumbs and fragments of verse which will be useful to your work. the Border was once peopled with poets, for every one that could fight could make ballads, some of them of great power and pathos. Some such people as the minstrels were living less than a century ago.' C 'I knew a man, the last of a race of district tale-tellers, who used to boast of the golden days of his youth, and say, that the world, with all its knowledge, was grown sixpence a day worse for him.' S 'How was that? how did he make his living? by telling tales, or singing ballads?' C. 'By both. he had a devout tale for the old, and a merry song for the young, he was a sort of beggar.' S 'Out upon thee, Allan, dost thou call that begging? Why, man, we make our bread by story-telling, and honest bread it is.'"

I ought not to close this extract without observing that Sir F. Chantrey presented the original bust, of which Mr Cunningham speaks, to Sir Walter himself; by whose remotest descendants it will undoubtedly be held in additional honour on that account. The poet had the further gratification of learning that three copies were executed in marble before the original quitted the studio. one for Windsor Castle, a second for Apsley House, and a third for the friendly sculptor's own private collec-

tion The *legitimate* casts of this bust have since been multiplied beyond perhaps any example whatever Mr Cunningham remembers not fewer than fifteen hundred of them (price four guineas each) being ordered *for exportation*—chiefly to the United States of America—within one year Of the myriads, or rather millions, of inferior copies manufactured and distributed by unauthorized persons, it would be in vain to attempt any calculation.

CHAPTER XIX.

ABBOTSFORD BUILT—CONTRACT FOR FOUR WORKS OF FICTION—ENORMOUS PROFITS AND EXTRAVAGANT PROJECTS OF CONSTABLE

DURING Scott's visit to London, in July, 1821, there appeared a work which was read with eager curiosity and delight by the public—with much private diversion besides by his friends—and which he himself must have gone through with a very odd mixture of emotions. I allude to the volume entitled "Letters to Richard Heber, Esq., containing critical remarks on the series of novels beginning with *Waverley*, and an attempt to ascertain their author," which was soon known to have been penned by Mr John Leicester Adolphus, a distinguished alumnus of the University then represented in Parliament by Sir Walter's early friend Heber. Previously to the publication of these Letters, the opinion that Scott was the author of *Waverley* had indeed become well settled in the English, to say nothing of the Scottish, mind, a great variety of circumstances, external as well as internal, had by degrees co-operated to its general establishment yet there were not wanting persons who still dissented, or at least affected to dissent, from it. It was reserved for the enthusiastic industry and admirable ingenuity of this juvenile academic to set the question at rest, by an accumulation of critical evidence which no sophistry could evade, and yet produced in a style of such high-bred delicacy, that it was impossible for the hitherto "veiled prophet" to take the slightest offence with the hand that had for ever abolished his disguise. The only sceptical scruple that survived this exposition was extinguished in due time by Scott's avowal of the *sole and unassisted* authorship of his novels, and now Mr Adolphus's Letters have shared the fate of other elaborate arguments, the thesis of which has ceased to be controverted.

When *Guy Mannering* was first published, the Ettrick Shepherd said to Professor Wilson, "I have done wi' doubts now. Colonel Mannering is just Walter Scott, painted by himself." This was repeated to James Ballantyne, and he again mentioned it to Scott, who smiled in approbation of the Shepherd's shrewdness, and often afterwards, when the printer expressed an opinion in which he could not concur, would cut him short with—"James, James, you'll find that Colonel Mannering has laid down the law on this point."

I have it not in my power to produce the letter in which Scott conveyed to Heber his opinion of this work. I know, however, that it ended with a request that he should present Mr Adolphus with his thanks for the handsome terms in which his poetical efforts had been spoken of throughout, and request him, in the name of the *author of Marmion*, not to revisit Scotland without reserving a day for Abbotsford.

When Sir Walter returned from London, he brought with him Mr Blore's detailed plans for the completion of Abbotsford, the wall and gateway of the court in front, and the beautiful open screen-work of stone connecting the house with the garden—this last having been originally devised by himself, and constituting certainly the most graceful feature about the edifice. The foundations towards the river were forthwith laid, and some little progress was made during the autumn, but he was very reluctant to authorize the demolition of the rustic porch of the old cottage, with its luxuriant overgrowth of roses and jessamines; kept it standing for months after his workpeople complained of the obstruction, and indeed could not make up his mind to sign the death-warrant of this favourite bower until winter had robbed it of its beauties. He then made an excursion from Edinburgh, on purpose to be present at its downfall—saved as many of the creepers as seemed likely to survive removal, and planted them with his own hands, about a somewhat similar porch, erected expressly for their reception, at his daughter Sophia's little cottage of Chiefswood.

There my wife and I spent this summer and autumn of 1821, the first of several seasons, which will ever dwell on my memory as the happiest of my life. We were near enough Abbotsford to partake as often as we liked of its brilliant and constantly varying society, yet could do so without being exposed to the worry and exhaustion of spirit which the daily reception of new-comers entailed upon all the family, except Sir Walter himself. But, in truth, even he was not always proof against the annoyances connected with such a style of open housekeeping. Even his temper sank sometimes under the solemn applauses of learned dulness, the rapid raptures of painted and periwigged dowagers, the horse-leech avidity with which underbred foreigners urged their questions, and the pompous simpers of condescending magnates. When sore beset at home in this way, he would every now and then discover that he had some very particular business to attend to on an outlying part of his estate, and craving the indulgence of his guests overnight, appear at the cabin in the glen before its inhabitants were astir in the morning. The clatter of Sibyl Gray's hoofs, the yelping of Minstard and Spice, and his own joyous shout of *racallée* under our windows were the signal that he had burst his toils and meant for that day to "take his ease in his inn." On descending, he was to be found seated with all his dogs and ours about him, under a spreading ash that overshadowed half the bank between the cottage and the brook, pointing the edge of his woodman's axe for himself, and listening to Tom Purdie's lecture touching the plantation that most needed thinning. After breakfast he would take possession of a dressing-room upstairs, and write a chapter of *The Pirate*, and then, having made up and dispatched his packet for Mr Ballantyne, away to join Purdie wherever the foresters were at work, and sometimes to labour among them as strenuously as John Swanston himself, until it was time either to rejoin his own party at Abbotsford, or the quiet circle of the cottage. When his guests were few and friendly, he often made them come over and meet him at Chiefswood in a body towards evening; and surely he never appeared to more amiable advantage than when helping his young people with their little arrangements upon such occasions. He

was ready with all sorts of devices to supply the wants of a narrow establishment, he used to delight particularly in sinking the wine in a well under the brae ere he went out, and hauling up the basket just before dinner was announced, this primitive process being, he said, what he had always practised when a young housekeeper, and in his opinion far superior in its results to any application of ice, and, in the same spirit, whenever the weather was sufficiently genial, he voted for dining out of doors altogether, which at once got rid of the inconvenience of very small rooms, and made it natural and easy for the gentlemen to help the ladies, so that the paucity of servants went for nothing. Mr Rose used to amuse himself with likening the scene and the party to the closing act of one of those little French dramas where "Monsieur le Comte" and "Madame la Comtesse" appear feasting at a village bridal under the trees, but in truth our "M le Comte" was only trying to live over again for a few simple hours his own old life of Lasswade.

When circumstances permitted, he usually spent one evening at least in the week at our little cottage, and almost as frequently he did the like with the Fergusons, to whose table he could bring chance visitors, when he pleased, with equal freedom as to his daughter's. Indeed, it seemed to be much a matter of chance, any fine day when there had been no alarming invasion of the Southron, whether the three families, which, in fact, made but one, should dine at Abbotsford, at Huntly Burn, or at Chiefswood, and at none of them was the party considered quite complete unless it included also Mr Laidlaw. Death has laid a heavy hand upon that circle—as happy a circle, I believe, as ever met. Bright eyes now closed in dust, gay voices for ever silenced, seem to haunt me as I write. With three exceptions, they are all gone. Even she whom I may now sadly record as, next to Sir Walter himself, the chief ornament and delight of all those simple meetings—she to whose love I owed my own place in them—Scott's eldest daughter, the one of all his children who in countenance, mind, and manners most resembled himself, and who indeed was as like him in all things as a gentle innocent woman can ever be to a great man deeply tried and skilled in the struggles and perplexities of active life—she, too, is no more. And in the very hour that saw her laid in her grave, the only other female survivor, her dearest friend Margaret Ferguson, breathed her last also. But enough, and more than I intended, I must resume the story of Abbotsford.

During several weeks of that delightful summer, Scott had under his roof Mr William Erskine and two of his daughters, this being, I believe, their first visit to Tweedside since the death of Mrs Erskine in September, 1819. He had probably made a point of having his friend with him at this particular time, because he was desirous of having the benefit of his advice and corrections from day to day as he advanced in the composition of *The Pirate*—with the localities of which romance the Sheriff of Orkney and Zetland was of course thoroughly familiar. At all events, the constant and eager delight with which Erskine watched the progress of the tale has left a deep impression on my memory, and indeed I heard so many of its chapters first read from the MS by him, that I can never open the book now without thinking I hear his voice. Sir Walter used to give him at breakfast the pages he had written that morning, and

very commonly, while he was again at work in his study, Erskine would walk over to Chiefswood, that he might have the pleasure of reading them aloud to my wife and me under our favourite tree, before the packet had to be sealed up for the printer, or rather for the transcriber, in Edinburgh. I cannot paint the delight and the pride with which he acquitted himself on such occasions. The little artifice of his manner was merely superficial, and was wholly forgotten as tender affection and admiration, fresh as the impulses of childhood, glistened in his eye and trembled in his voice.

This reminds me that I have not yet attempted any sketch of the person and manners of Scott's most intimate friend. Their case was no contradiction of the old saying, that the most attached comrades are often very unlike each other in character and temperament. The mere physical contrast was as strong as could well be, and this is not unworthy of notice here, for Erskine was, I think, the only man in whose society Scott took great pleasure, during the more vigorous part of his life, that had neither constitution nor inclination for any of the rough bodily exercises in which he himself delighted. The Counsellor, as Scott always called him, was a little man of feeble make, who seemed unhappy when his pony got beyond a foot-pace, and had never, I should suppose, addicted himself to any out-of-doors sport whatever. He would, I fancy, have as soon thought of slaying his own mutton as of handling a fowling-piece. He used to shudder when he saw a party equipped for coursing, as if murder were in the wind, but the cool meditative angler was in his eyes the abomination of abominations. His small elegant features, hectic cheek, and soft hazel eyes were the index of the quick sensitive gentle spirit within. He had the warm heart of a woman, her generous enthusiasm, and some of her weaknesses. A beautiful landscape or a fine strain of music would send the tears rolling down his cheek; and though capable, I have no doubt, of exhibiting, had his duty called him to do so, the highest spirit of a hero or a martyr, he had very little command over his nerves amidst circumstances such as men of ordinary mould, to say nothing of iron fabrics like Scott's, regard with indifference. He would dismount to lead his horse down what his friend hardly perceived to be a descent at all, grew pale at a precipice, and, unlike the White Lady of Avenel, would go a long way round for a bridge.

Erskine had as yet been rather unfortunate in his professional career, and thought a sheriffship by no means the kind of advancement due to his merits, and which his connexions might naturally have secured for him. These circumstances had at the time when I first observed him tinged his demeanour. He had come to intermingle a certain wayward snappishness now and then with his forensic exhibitions, and in private seemed inclined (though altogether incapable of abandoning the Tory party) to say bitter things of people in high places, but, with these exceptions, never was benevolence towards all the human race more lively and overflowing than his evidently was, even when he considered himself as one who had reason to complain of his luck in the world. Now, however, these little asperities had disappeared, one great real grief had cast its shadow over him, and, submissive to the chastisement of Heaven, he had no longer any thoughts for the petty misusage of mankind.

Scott's apprehension was, that his ambition was extinguished with his resentment; and he was now using every endeavour, in connection with their common friend the Lord Advocate Rae, to procure for Erskine that long coveted seat on the bench, about which the subdued widower himself had ceased to occupy his mind. By-and-bye these views were realized to Scott's high satisfaction, and for a brief season with the happiest effect on Erskine's own spirits, but I shall not anticipate the sequel.

Meanwhile he shrank from the collisions of general society in Edinburgh, and lived almost exclusively in his own little circle of intimates. His conversation, though somewhat precise and finical on the first impression, was rich in knowledge. His literary ambition, retive and aspiring at the outset, had long before this time merged in his profound veneration for Scott, but he still read a great deal, and I did so as much, I believe, with a view to assisting Scott by hints and suggestions, as for his own amusement. He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old and generally speaking, dull books, and in bringing out his stores he often showed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit.

Scott, on his side, respected, trusted, and loved him, much as an affectionate husband does the wife who gave him her heart in youth, and thinks his thoughts rather than her own in the evening of life; he soothed, cheered, and sustained Erskine habitually. I do not believe a more entire and perfect confidence ever subsisted than theirs was and always had been in each other, and to one who had duly observed the creeping jealousies of human nature, it might perhaps seem doubtful on which side the balance of real nobility of heart and character, as displayed in their connection at the time of which I am speaking, ought to be cast.

Among the common friends of their young days, of whom they both delighted to speak—and always spoke with warm and equal affection—was the sister of their friend Cranstoun, the confidant of Scott's first unfortunate love, whom neither had now seen for a period of more than twenty years. This lady had undergone domestic afflictions more than sufficient to have crushed almost any spirit but her own. Her husband, the Count Purgstall, had died some years before this time, leaving her an only son, a youth of the most amiable disposition, and possessing abilities which, had he lived to develop them, must have secured for him a high station in the annals of genius. This hope of her eyes, the last heir of an illustrious lineage, followed his father to the tomb in the nineteenth year of his age. The desolate Countess was urged by her family in Scotland to return, after this bereavement, to her native country, but she had vowed to her son on his death-bed that one day her dust should be mingled with his, and no argument could induce her to depart from the resolution of remaining in solitary Styria. By her desire, a valued friend of the house of Purgstall, who had been born and bred up on their estates, the celebrated Orientalist, Joseph von Hammer, compiled a little memoir of the two last Counts of Purgstall, which he put forth in January, 1821, under the title of *Denkmahl*, or Monument, and of this work the Countess sent a copy to Sir Walter (with whom her correspondence had been during several years suspended) by the hands of her eldest brother, Mr. Henry Cranstoun, who had been visiting her

in Styria, and who at this time occupied a villa within a few miles of Abbotsford. Scott's letter of acknowledgment never reached her.

While *The Pirate* was advancing under Mr Erskine's eye, Scott had even more than the usual allowance of minor literary operations on hand. He edited a reprint of a curious old book called Franck's *Northern Memoir*, and the *Contemplative Angler*, and he also prepared for the press a volume published soon after under the title of *Chronological Notes on Scottish Affairs, 1680 to 1701*, from the *Diary of Lord Fountainhall*. The professional writings of that celebrated old lawyer had been much in his hands from his early years, on account of the incidental light which they throw on the events of a most memorable period in Scottish history, and he seems to have contemplated some more considerable selection from his remains, but to have dropped these intentions on being given to understand that they might interfere with those of Lord Fountainhall's accomplished representative, Sir Thomas Dick Lauder.

In August appeared the volume of the *Novelist's Library* containing Scott's *Life of Smollett*, and it being now ascertained that John Ballantyne had died a debtor, the editor offered to proceed with this series of prefaces, on the footing that the whole profits of the work should go to his widow. Mr Constable, whose health was now beginning to break, had gone southwards in quest of more genial air, and was at Hastings when he heard of this proposition. He immediately wrote to me, entreating me to represent to Sir Walter that the undertaking, having been coldly received at first, was unlikely to grow in favour if continued on the same plan—that in his opinion the bulk of the volumes, and the small type of their text, had been unwisely chosen for a work of mere entertainment, and could only be suitable for one of reference, that Ballantyne's *Novelist's Library*, therefore, ought to be stopped at once, and another in a lighter shape, to range with the late collected edition of the first series of the *Waverley* romances, announced with his own name as publisher, and Scott's as editor. He proposed at the same time to commence the issue of a *Select Library of English Poetry*, with prefaces and a few notes by the same hand, and calculating that each of these collections should extend to twenty-five volumes, and that the publication of both might be concluded within two years—"the writing of the prefaces, &c, forming perhaps an occasional relief from more important labours"—the bookseller offered to pay their editor in all the sum of £6,000, a small portion of which sum, as he hinted, would undoubtedly be more than Mrs John Ballantyne could ever hope to derive from the prosecution of her husband's last publishing adventure. Various causes combined to prevent the realization of these magnificent projects. Scott now, as at the beginning of his career of speculation, had views about what a collection of *English Poetry* should be, in which even Constable could not, on consideration, be made to concur, and I have already explained the coldness with which he regarded further attempts upon our elder novelists. The Ballantyne Library crept on to the tenth volume, and was then dropped abruptly, and the double negotiation with Constable was never renewed.

Lady Louisa Stuart had not, I fancy, read Scott's *Lives of the Novelists*

until, some years after this time, they were collected into two little piratical duodecimos by a Parisian bookseller, and on her then expressing her admiration of them, together with her astonishment that the speculation, of which they formed a part, should have attracted little notice of any sort, he answered as follows —“I am delighted they afford any entertainment, for they are rather flimsily written, being done merely to oblige a friend — they were yoked to a great, ill-conditioned, lubberly, double-columned book, which they were as useful to tug along as a set of fleas would be to draw a mail-coach — It is very difficult to answer your ladyship’s curious question concerning change of taste, but whether in young or old, it takes place insensibly without the parties being aware of it — A grand-aunt of my own, Mrs Keith of Ravelstone, who was a person of some condition, being a daughter of Sir John Swinton of Swinton, lived with unabated vigour of intellect to a very advanced age — She was very fond of reading, and enjoyed it to the last of her long life — One day she asked me, when we happened to be alone together, whether I had ever seen Mrs Behn’s novels? I confessed the charge — Whether I could get her a sight of them? I said, with some hesitation, I believed I could, but that I did not think she would like either the manners or the language, which approached too near that of Charles II’s time to be quite proper reading — ‘Nevertheless,’ said the good old lady, ‘I remember them being so much admired, and being so much interested in them myself, that I wish to look at them again’ — To hear was to obey — So I sent Mrs Aphra Behn, curiously sealed up, with ‘private and confidential’ on the packet, to my gay old grand-aunt — The next time I saw her afterwards, she gave me back Aphra, properly wrapped up, with nearly these words — ‘Take back your bonny Mrs Behn, and, if you will take my advice, put her in the fire, for I found it impossible to get through the very first novel — But is it not,’ she said, ‘a very odd thing that I, an old woman of eighty and upwards, sitting alone, feel myself ashamed to read a book which, sixty years ago, I have heard read aloud for the amusement of large circles, consisting of the first and most creditable society in London?’ — This, of course, was owing to the gradual improvement of the national taste and delicacy — The change that brings into and throws out of fashion particular styles of composition is something of the same kind — It does not signify what the greater or less merit of the book is — the reader, as Tony Lumpkin says, must be in a concatenation accordingly — the fashion, or the general taste, must have prepared him to be pleased, or put him on his guard against it — It is much like *dress* — If Clarissa should appear before a modern party in her lace ruffles and head-dress, or Lovelace in his wig, however genteelly powdered, I am afraid they would make no conquests, the fashion which makes conquests of us in other respects is very powerful in literary composition, and adds to the effect of some works, while in others it forms their sole merit.”

Among other miscellaneous work of this autumn, Scott amused some leisure hours with writing a series of Private Letters, supposed to have been discovered in the repositories of a Noble English Family, and giving a picture of manners in town and country during the early part of the reign of James I. These letters were printed as fast as he penned them, in a handsome quarto form, and he furnished the margin with a running

commentary of notes, drawn up in the character of a disappointed chaplain, a keen Whig, or rather Radical, overflowing on all occasions with spleen against monarchy and aristocracy. When the printing had reached the seventy-second page, however, he was told candidly by Erskine, by James Ballantyne, and also by myself, that, however clever his imitation of the epistolary style of the period in question, he was throwing away in these letters the materials of as good a romance as he had ever penned, and a few days afterwards he said to me, patting Sibyl's neck till she danced under him, "You were all quite right if the letters had passed for genuine, they would have found favour only with a few musty antiquaries, and if the joke were detected, there was not story enough to carry it off. I shall burn the sheets, and give you Bonny King Jamie and all his tail in the old shape, as soon as I can get Captain Goffe within view of the gallows."

Such was the origin of the *Fortunes of Nigel*.

I think it must have been about the middle of October that he dropped the scheme of this fictitious correspondence. I well remember the morning that he began the *Fortunes of Nigel*. The day being destined for Newark Hill, I went over to Abbotsford before breakfast, and found Mr Terry (who had been staying there for some time) walking about with his friend's master-mason, of whose proceedings he took a fatherly charge, as he might well do, since the plan of the building had been in a considerable measure the work of his own taste. While Terry and I were chit-chatting, Scott came out bareheaded, with a bunch of MS. in his hand, and said, "Well, lads, I've laid the keel of a new lugger this morning—here it is, be off to the waterside, and let me hear how you like it." Terry took the papers, and walking up and down by the river, read to me the first chapter of *Nigel*. He expressed great delight with the animated opening, and especially with the contrast between its thorough stir of London life, and a chapter about Norna of the Fitful Head, in the third volume of *The Pirate*, which had been given to him in a similar manner the morning before. I could see that (according to the Sheriff's phrase) *he smelt roast meat*, here there was every prospect of a fine field for the art of *Terrification*. The actor, when our host met us returning from the haugh, did not fail to express his opinion that the new novel would be of this quality. Sir Walter, as he took the MS. from his hand, eyed him with a gay smile, in which genuine benevolence mingled with mock exultation, and then throwing himself into an attitude of comical dignity, he rolled out, in the tones of John Kemble, one of the loftiest bursts of Ben Jonson's *Mammon*—

"Come on, sir Now you set your foot on shore,
In *Nove orbis*—

————— Pertinax, my Surly,*
Again I say to thee aloud, Be rich,
This day thou shalt have ingots."

* The fun of this application of "my Surly" will not escape any one who remembers the kind and good humoured Terry's power of assuming a peculiarly saturnine aspect. The queer grimness of look was invaluable to the comedian in several of his best parts, and in private he often called it up when his heart was most cheerful.

This was another period of "refreshing the machine" Early in November, I find Sir Walter writing thus to Constable's partner, Mr. Cadell. "I want two books, Malcolm's London Redivivus, or some such name, and Derham's Artificial Clockmaker." [The reader of Nigel will understand these requests] "All good luck to you, commercially and otherwise I am grown a shabby letter-writer, for my eyes are not so young as they were, and I grudge everything that does not go to press" Such a feeling must often have been present with him, yet I can find no period when he grudged writing a letter that might by possibility be of use to any of his family or friends

Sir Walter concluded before he went to town in November another negotiation of importance with this house They agreed to give for the remaining copyright of the four novels published between December, 1819, and January, 1821—to wit, *Ivanhoe*, *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Kenilworth*—the sum of five thousand guineas The stipulation about not revealing the author's name, under a penalty of £2,000, was repeated. By these four novels, the fruits of scarcely more than twelve months' hard labour he had already cleared at least £10,000 before this bargain was completed They, like their predecessors, were now issued in a collective shape, under the title of "*Historical Romances*, by the Author of *Waverley*"

I cannot pretend to guess what the actual state of Scott's pecuniary affairs was at the time when John Ballantyne's death relieved them from one great source of complication and difficulty But I have said enough to satisfy every reader that when he began the second, and far the larger division of his building at Abbotsford, he must have contemplated the utmost sum it would cost him as a mere trifle in relation to the resources at his command He must have reckoned on clearing £30,000 at least in the course of a couple of years by the novels written within such a period The publisher of his *Tales*, who best knew how they were produced, and what they brought of gross profit, and who must have had the strongest interest in keeping the author's name untarnished by any risk or reputation of failure, would willingly, as we have seen, have given him £6,000 more within a space of two years for works of a less serious sort, likely to be dispatched at leisure hours, without at all interfering with the main manufacture But, alas! even this was not all Messrs Constable had such faith in the prospective fertility of his imagination that they were by this time quite ready to sign bargains and grant bills for novels and romances to be produced hereafter, but of which the subjects and the names were alike unknown to them and to the man from whose pen they were to proceed A forgotten satirist well says,

"The active principle within

Works on some brains the effect of gin,"

but in his case, every external influence combined to stir the flame and swell the intoxication of restless exuberant energy His allies knew, indeed, what he did not—that the sale of his novels was rather less than it had been in the days of *Ivanhoe*—and hints had sometimes been dropped to him that it might be well to try the effects of a pause But he always thought—and James Ballantyne had decidedly the same opinion—that his best things were those which he threw off the most

easily and swiftly; and it was no wonder that his booksellers, seeing how immeasurably even his worst excelled in popularity as in merit any other person's best, should have shrunk from the experiment of a decisive damper. On the contrary, they might be excused for from time to time flattering themselves that if the books sold at a less rate, this might be counterpoised by still greater rapidity of production. They could not make up their minds to cast the peerless vessel adrift, and, in short, after every little whisper of prudential misgiving, echoed the un-failing burden of Ballantyne's song—to push on, hoisting more and more sail as the wind lulled.

He was as eager to do as they could be to suggest—and this I well knew at the time. I had, however, no notion, until all his correspondence lay before me, of the extent to which he had permitted himself thus early to build on the chances of life, health, and continued popularity. Before the *Fortunes of Nigel* issued from the press Scott had exchanged instruments, and received his bookseller's bills, for no less than four "works of fiction," not one of them otherwise described in the deeds of agreement—to be produced in unbroken succession, each of them to fill at least three volumes, but with proper saving clauses as to increase of copy-money in case any of them should run to four. And within two years all this anticipation had been wiped off by *Peveril of the Peak*, *Quentin Durward*, *St Ronan's Well*, and *Redgauntlet*, and the new castle was by that time complete, and overflowing with all its splendour, but by that time the end also was approaching!

The splendid romance of *The Pirate* was published in the beginning of December, 1821, and the wild freshness of its atmosphere, the beautiful contrast of Minna and Brenda, and the exquisitely drawn character of Captain Cleveland, found the reception which they deserved. The work was analysed with remarkable care in the *Quarterly Review*, by a critic second to few, either in the manly heartiness of his sympathy with the felicities of genius, or in the honest acuteness of his censure in cases of negligence and confusion. This was the second of a series of articles in that journal, conceived and executed in a tone widely different from those given by Mr Gifford himself to *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, and the *Antiquary*. I fancy the old gentleman had become convinced that he had made a grievous mistake in this matter, before he acquiesced in Scott's proposal about "quartering the child" in January, 1816, and if he was fortunate in finding a contributor able and willing to treat the rest of Father Jedediah's progeny with excellent skill, and in a spirit more accordant with the just and general sentiments of the public, we must also recognize a pleasing and honourable trait of character in the frankness with which the reclusive and often despotic editor now resigned the pen to Mr Senior.

On the 13th December Sir Walter received a copy of *Cain*, as yet unpublished, from Lord Byron's bookseller, who had been instructed to ask whether he had any objection to having the "*Mystery*" dedicated to him. He replied in these words —

"Edinburgh, 17th December, 1821

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I accept with feelings of great obligation the flattering proposal of

Lord Byron to prefix my name to the very grand and tremendous drama of Cam. I may be partial to it, and you will allow I have cause, but I do not know that his Muse has ever taken so lofty a flight amid her former soarings. He has certainly matched Milton on his own ground. Some part of the language is bold, and may shock one class of readers, whose tone will be adopted by others out of affectation or envy. But then they must condemn the *Paradise Lost*, if they have a mind to be consistent. The fiend-like reasoning and bold blasphemy of the fiend and of his pupil, lead exactly to the point which was to be expected—the commission of the first murder, and the ruin and despair of the perpetrator.

"I do not see how any one can accuse the author himself of Manichæism. The devil takes the language of that sect, doubtless, because, not being able to deny the existence of the Good Principle, he endeavours to exalt himself—the Evil Principle—to a seeming equality with the Good, but such arguments, in the mouth of such a being, can only be used to deceive and to betray. Lord Byron might have made this more evident by placing in the mouth of Adam, or of some good and protecting spirit, the reasons which render the existence of moral evil consistent with the general benevolence of the Deity. The great key to the mystery is, perhaps, the imperfection of our own faculties, which see and feel strongly the partial evils which press upon us, but know too little of the general system of the universe, to be aware how the existence of these is to be reconciled with the benevolence of the great Creator—Ever yours truly,
"WALTER SCOTT"

In some preceding narratives of Sir Walter Scott's life I find the principal feature for 1821 to be an affair of which I have as yet said nothing, and which, notwithstanding the examples I have before me, I must be excused for treating on a scale commensurate with his real share and interest therein. I allude to an unfortunate newspaper, by name the *Beacon*, which began to be published in Edinburgh in January, 1821, and was abruptly discontinued in the August of the same year. It originated in the alarm with which the Edinburgh Tories contemplated the progress of Radical doctrines during the agitation of the Queen's business in 1820, and the want of any adequate counter-action on the part of the ministerial newspapers in the north. James Ballantyne had on that occasion swerved from his banner, and by so doing given not a little offence to Scott. He approved, therefore, of the project of a new weekly journal, to be conducted by some steadier hand, and when it was proposed to raise the requisite capital for the speculation by private subscription, expressed his willingness to contribute whatever sum should be named by other gentlemen of his standing. This was accepted, of course, but every part of the advice with which the only man in the whole conclave that understood a jot about such things coupled his tender of alliance, was departed from in practice. No experienced and responsible editor of the sort he pointed out as indispensable was secured, the violence of disaffected spleen was encountered by a vein of satire which seemed more fierce than frolicsome; the law officers of the Crown, whom he had most strenuously cautioned against any participation in the concern, were rash enough to commit themselves in it; the subscribers, like true Scotchmen,

in place of paying down their money and thinking no more of that part of the matter, chose to put their names to a bond of security on which the sum total was to be advanced by bankers, and thus by their own over-caution as to a few pounds, laid the foundation for a long train of humiliating distresses and disgraces, and finally, when the rude drollery of the young hot-bloods to whom they had entrusted the editorship of their paper produced its natural consequences, and the ferment of Whig indignation began to boil over upon the dignified patrons of what was denounced as a systematic scheme of calumny and defamation—these seniors shrank from the dilemma as rashly as they had plunged into it, and instead of compelling the juvenile allies to adopt a more prudent course, and gradually give the journal a tone worthy of open approbation, they, at the first blush of personal difficulty, left their instruments in the lurch, and, without even consulting Scott, ordered the Beacon to be extinguished at an hour's notice

A more pitiable mass of blunder and imbecility was never heaped together than the whole of this affair exhibited, and from a very early period Scott was so disgusted with it that he never even saw the newspaper, of which Whigs and Radicals believed, or affected to believe, that the conduct and management were in some degree at least under his dictation. The results were lamentable the Beacon was made the subject of Parliamentary discussion, from which the then heads of Scotch Toryism did not escape in any very consolatory plight, but above all, the Beacon bequeathed its rancour and rashness, though not its ability, to a Glasgow paper of similar form and pretensions, entitled the Sentinel. By that organ the personal quarrels of the Beacon were taken up and pursued with relentless industry, and finally, the Glasgow editors disagreeing, some moment of angry confusion betrayed a box of MSS, by which the late Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck was revealed as the writer of certain truculent enough pasquinades. A leading Edinburgh Whig, who had been pilloried in one or more of these, challenged Boswell, and the baronet fell in as miserable a quarrel as ever cost the blood of a high-spirited gentleman

This tragedy occurred in the early part of 1822, and soon afterwards followed those debates on the whole business in the House of Commons, for which, if any reader feels curiosity about them, I refer him to the Parliamentary histories of the time. A single extract from one of Scott's letters to a member of the then Government in London will be sufficient for my purpose, and abundantly confirm what I have said as to his personal part in the affairs of the Beacon.

To J W Croker, Esq, Admiralty

"MY DEAR CROKER,—

"I had the fate of Cassandra in the Beacon matter from beginning to end. I endeavoured in vain to impress on them the necessity of having an editor who was really up to the business, and could mix spirit with discretion—one of those 'gentlemen of the press,' who understand the exact lengths to which they can go in their vocation. Then I wished them, in place of that bond, to have each thrown down his hundred pounds, and never inquired more about it, and lastly, I

exclaimed against the Crown counsel being at all concerned. In the two first remonstrances I was not listened to—in the last I thought myself successful, and it was not till long afterwards that I heard they had actually subscribed the bond. Then the hasty renunciation of the thing, as if we had been doing something very atrocious, put me mad altogether. The younger brethren too allege that they are put into the front of the fight, and deserted on the first pinch; and on my word, I cannot say the accusation is altogether false, though I have been doing my best to mediate betwixt the parties, and keep the peace if possible. The fact is, it is a bad business, and will continue long to have bad consequences—

Yours in all love and kindness,

"WALTER SCOTT"

CHAPTER XX

HALIDON HILL AND MACDUFF'S CROSS—FORTUNES OF NIGEL—KING GEORGE IV IN SCOTLAND.

IN January, 1822, Sir Walter had the great satisfaction of seeing Erskine at length promoted to a seat on the bench of the Court of Session, by the title of Lord Kinnedder, and his pleasure was enhanced doubtless by the reflection that his friend owed this elevation very much, if not mainly, to his own unwearied exertions on his behalf. This happy event occurred just about the time when Joanna Baillie was distressed by hearing of the sudden and total ruin of an old friend of hers, a Scotch gentleman long distinguished in the commerce of the city of London, and she thought of collecting among her literary acquaintance such contributions as might, with some gleanings of her own portfolios, fill up a volume of poetical miscellanies, to be published, by subscription, for the benefit of the merchant's family. In requesting Sir Walter to write something for this purpose, she also asked him to communicate the scheme, in her name, to various common friends in the north—among others, to the new Judge. Scott's answer was —

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—

“No one has so good a title as you to command me in all my strength and in all my weakness. I do not believe I have a single scrap of unpublished poetry, for I was never a willing composer of occasional pieces, and when I have been guilty of such effusions, it was to answer the purpose of some publisher of songs, or the like immediate demand. The consequence is that all these trifles have been long before the public, and whatever I add to your collection must have the grace of novelty, in case it should have no other. I do not know what should make it rather a melancholy task for me now-a-days to sit down to versify, I did not use to think it so, but I have ceased, I know not why, to find pleasure in it, and yet I do not think I have lost any of the faculties I ever possessed for the task, but I was never fond of my own poetry, and am now much out of concert with it. All this another person less candid in construction than yourself would interpret into a hint to send a good dose of praise, but you know we have agreed long ago to be above ordinances, like Cromwell's saints. When I go to the country upon the 12th of March, I will try what the water-side can do for me, for there is no inspiration in causeways and kennels, or even the Court of Session. You have the victory over me now, for I remember laughing at you for saying you could only write your beautiful lyrics upon a fine warm day. But what is this something to be? I wish you would give me a subject, for that would cut off half my difficulties

"I am delighted with the prospect of seeing Miss Edgeworth, and making her personal acquaintance. I expect her to be just what you describe: a being totally void of affectation, and who, like one other lady of my acquaintance, carries her literary reputation as freely and easily as the milk-maid in my country does the *keggin*, which she carries on her head and walks as gracefully with it as a duchess. Some of the fair sex, and some of the foul sex too, carry their renown in London fashion—on a yoke and a pair of patches. The consequence is, that besides pulling spitefully, they are hitting every one on the shins with their buckets. Now, this is all nonsense, too fantastic to be written to anybody but a person of good sense. By the way, did you know Miss Austen, author of some novels which have a great deal of nature in them of nature in ordinary and middle life, to be sure, but valuable from their great simplicity and correct drawing. I wonder which way she carried her pail!"

"I did indeed rejoice at Erskine's promotion. There is a degree of melancholy attending the later stage of a barrister's profession, which, though no one cares for continuities attendant on a man of fifty or thereabout, in a rusty black lambazine gown, are not the less cruelly felt, their influence more or later felt, for younger men will work cheaper, and longer, and harder—besides that the cases are few, comparatively, in which senior counsel are engaged, and it is not etiquette to ask any one in that advanced age to take the whole burden of a cause. Insensibly, without decay of talent, and without losing the public esteem, there is a gradual decay of employment, which almost no man ever practised thirty years without experiencing, and thus the honours and dignities of the Bench, so hardly earned, and themselves leading but to toils of another kind, are peculiarly desirable. Had me would have sat there ten years ago but for wretched intrigues. He has a very poetical and elegant mind, but I do not know of any poetry of his writing, except some additional stanzas to Collins' Ode on Scotch Superstitions, long since published in the *Border Minstrelsy*. I doubt it would not be consistent with his high office to write poetry now, but you may add his name with Mrs. Scott's (Heaven forgive me! I should have said Lady Scott) and mine to the subscription list. I will not promise to get you more, for people always look on as if you were asking the guinea for yourself—there John Bull has the better of Sawney; to be sure he has more grain to be sown, but we retain our reluctance to part with hard cash, though profuse enough in our hospitality. I have seen a lady, after giving us more champagne and claret than we cared to drink, look pale at the idea of giving a crown in charity."

"I am seriously tempted, though it would be sending coals to Newcastle with a very small one, not to mention salt to Dyarl, and all other superfluous importations—I am, I say, strangely tempted to write for your *periodical* a dramatic scene on an incident which happened at the battle of Halidon Hill (I think). It was to me a nursery tale, often told by Mrs. Margaret Swinton, sister of my maternal grandmother, a fine old lady of high blood, and of as high a mind, who was literally descended from one of the actors. The anecdote was briefly thus: The family of Swinton is very ancient, and was once very powerful, and at the period

of this battle the Knight of Swinton was gigantic in stature, unequalled in strength, and a sage and experienced leader to boot. In one of those quarrels which divided the kingdom of Scotland in every corner, he had slain his neighbour, the head of the Gordon family, and an inveterate feud had ensued, for it seems that powerful as the Gordons always were, the Swintons could then bide a bang with them. Well, the battle of Halidon began, and the Scottish army, unskilfully disposed on the side of a hill where no arrow fell in vain, was dreadfully galled by the archery of the English, as usual, upon which Swinton approached the Scottish general, requesting command of a body of cavalry, and pledging his honour that he would, if so supported, charge and disperse the English archers—one of the manœuvres by which Bruce gained the battle of Bannockburn. This was refused, out of stupidity or sullenness, by the general, on which Swinton expressed his determination to charge at the head of his own followers, though totally inadequate for the purpose. The young Gordon heard the proposal, son of him whom Swinton had slain, and with one of those irregular bursts of generosity and feeling which redeem the dark ages from the character of utter barbarism, he threw himself from his horse, and kneeled down before Swinton. ‘I have not yet been knighted,’ he said, ‘and never can I take the honour from the hand of a truer, more loyal, more valiant leader than he who slew my father. grant me,’ he said, ‘the boon I ask, and I unite my forces to yours, that we may live and die together.’ His feudal enemy became instantly his godfather in chivalry and his ally in battle. Swinton knighted the young Gordon, and they rushed down at the head of their united retainers, dispersed the archery, and would have turned the battle, had they been supported. At length they both fell, and all who followed them were cut off, and it was remarked that while the fight lasted the old giant guarded the young man’s life more than his own, and the same was indicated by the manner in which his body lay stretched over that of Gordon. Now, do not laugh at my Berwickshire *burr*, which I assure you is literally and lineally handed down to me by my grandmother from this fine old Goliath. Tell me, if I can clamber up the story into a sort of single scene, will it answer your purpose? I would rather try my hand in blank verse than rhyme.

“The story, with many others of the same kind, is consecrated to me by the remembrance of the narrator, with her brown silk gown and triple ruffles, and her benevolent face, which was always beside our beds when there were childish complaints among us. Poor Aunt Margaret had a most shocking fate, being murdered by a favourite maid-servant in a fit of insanity, when I was about ten years old, the catastrophe was much owing to the scrupulous delicacy and high courage of my poor relation, who would not have the assistance of men called in for exposing the unhappy wretch her servant. I think you will not ask for a letter from me in a hurry again, but, as I have no chance of seeing you for a long time, I must be contented with writing. My kindest respects attend Mrs Agnes, your kind brother and family, and the Richardsons, little and big, short and tall, and believe me most truly yours,

“P.S.—Sophia is come up to her Sunday dinner, and begs to send a thousand remembrances, with the important intelligence that her baby

“W SCOTT”

actually says ma-ma, and bow wow, when he sees the dog. Moreover, he is christened John Hugh, and I intend to plant two little knolls at their cottage, to be called Mount Saint John and Hougomont. The papa also sends his respects."

At the commencement of this spring Scott found his new edifice in rapid progress; and letters on that subject to and from Terry, occupy, during many subsequent months, a very large share in his correspondence. Before the end of the vacation, however, he had finished the MS of his Nigel. Nor had he lost sight of his promise to Joanna Bailhe. He produced, and that, as I well remember, in the course of two rainy mornings, the dramatic sketch of Halidon Hill; but on concluding it, he found that he had given it an extent quite incompatible with his friend's arrangements for her charitable picnic. He therefore cast about for another subject likely to be embraced in smaller compass; and the Blair-Adam meeting of the next June supplied him with one in Macduff's Cross. Meantime, on hearing a whisper about Halidon Hill, Messrs Constable, without seeing the MS, forthwith tendered £1,000 for the copyright—the same sum that had appeared almost irrationally munificent when offered in 1807 for the embryo Marmion. It was accepted, and a letter from Constable himself, about to be introduced, will show how well the head of the firm was pleased with this wild bargain. At the moment when his head was giddy with the popular applauses of the new-launched Nigel, and although he had been informed that Peveril of the Peak was already on the stocks, he suggested that a little pinnacle, of the Halidon class, might easily be rigged out once a quarter, by way of diversion, and thus add another £4,000 per annum to the £10 or £15,000, on which all parties counted as the sure yearly profit of three-deckers *in fore*.

Before I quote Constable's effusion, however, I must recall to the reader's recollection some very gratifying, but I am sure perfectly sincere, laudation of him in his professional capacity, which the author of the Fortunes of Nigel had put into the mouth of his Captain Clutterbuck in the humorous Epistle Introductory to that novel. After alluding, in affectionate terms, to the recent death of John Ballantyne, the Captain adds,—“To this great deprivation has been added, I trust for a time only, the loss of another bibliopolical friend, whose vigorous intellect and liberal ideas have not only rendered his native country the mart of her own literature, but established there a court of letters, which must command respect, even from those most inclined to dissent from many of its canons. The effect of these changes, operated in a great measure by the strong sense and sagacious calculations of an individual, who knew how to avail himself, to an unhopcd-for extent, of the various kinds of talent which his country produced, will probably appear more clearly to the generation which shall follow the present. I entered the shop at the Cross to inquire after the health of my worthy friend, and learned with satisfaction that his residence in the south had abated the rigour of the symptoms of his disorder.”

It appears that Nigel was published on the 30th of May, 1822; and next day Constable writes as follows from his temporary residence near London :—

"Castlebeare Park, 31st May, 1822

"DEAR SIR WALTER,—

"I have received the highest gratification from the perusal of a certain new work I may indeed say new work, for it is entirely so, and will, if that be possible, eclipse in popularity all that has gone before it.

"The author will be blamed for one thing, however unreasonably, and that is, for concluding the story without giving his readers a little more of it. We are a set of ungrateful mortals. For one thing at least I trust I am never to be found so, for I must ever most duly appreciate the kind things intended to be applied to me in the Introductory Epistle to this work. I learn with astonishment, but not less delight, that the press is at work again, the title, which has been handed to me, is quite excellent.

"I am now so well as to find it compatible to pay my respects to some of my old haunts in the metropolis, where I go occasionally. I was in town yesterday, and so keenly were the people devouring my friend *Jingling Geordie*, that I actually saw them reading it in the streets as they passed along. I assure you there is no exaggeration in this. A new novel from the author of *Waverley* puts aside, in other words, puts down for the time, every other literary performance. The smack *Ocean*, by which the new work was shipped, arrived at the wharf on Sunday, the bales were got out by one on Monday morning, and before half-past ten o'clock 7,000 copies had been dispersed from 90 Cheapside*. I sent my secretary on purpose to witness the activity with which such things are conducted, and to bring me the account, gratifying certainly, which I now give you.

"I went yesterday to the shop of a curious person—Mr. Swaby, in Warden Street—to look at an old portrait which my son, when lately here, mentioned to me. It is, I think, a portrait of *James the Fourth*, and if not an original, is doubtless a picture as early as his reign. Our friend Mr. Thomson has seen it and is of the same opinion, but I purpose that you should be called upon to decide this nice point, and I have ordered it to be forwarded to you, trusting that ere long I may see it in the Armoury at Abbotsford.

"I found at the same place two large elbow chairs, elaborately carved, in boxwood, with figures, foliage, &c., perfectly entire. Mr. Swaby, from whom I purchased them, assured me that they came from the Borghese Palace at Rome, he possessed originally ten such chairs, and had sold six of them to the Duke of Rutland, for Belvoir Castle, where they will be appropriate furniture, the two which I have obtained would, I think, not be less so in the Library of Abbotsford.

"I have been so fortunate as to secure a still more curious article—a slab of mosaic pavement, quite entire and large enough to make an outer hearthstone, which I also destined for Abbotsford. It occurred to me that these three articles might prove suitable to your taste, and under that impression I am now induced to take the liberty of requesting you to accept them as a small but sincere pledge of grateful feeling. Our literary connection is too important to make it necessary for your publishers to trouble you about the pounds, shillings, and pence of such

* Constable's London agents, Messrs Hurst, Robinson, and Co, had then their premises in Cheapside.

things; and I therefore trust you will receive them on the footing I have thus taken the liberty to name. I have been on the outlook for antique carvings, and if I knew the purposes for which you would want such, I might probably be able to send you some.

"I was truly happy to hear of 'Halidon Hill,' and of the satisfactory arrangements made for its publication. I wish I had the power of prevailing with you to give us a similar production every three months, and that our ancient enemies on this side the Border might not have too much their own way, perhaps your next dramatic sketch might be Bannoekburn *. It would be presumptuous in me to point out subjects, but you know my craving to be great, and I cannot resist mentioning here that I should like to see a Battle of Hastings, a Cressy, a Bosworth Field, and many more.

"Sir Thomas Lawrence was so kind as to invite me to see his pictures—what an admirable portrait he has commenced of you!—he has altogether hit a happy and interesting expression. I do not know whether you have heard that there is an exhibition at Leeds this year. I had an application for the use of Raeburn's picture, which is now there, and it stands No. 1 in the catalogue, of which I enclose you a copy.

"You will receive with this a copy of the 'Poetry, Original and Selected' I have, I fear, overshot the mark by including the poetry of The Pirate, a liberty for which I must hope to be forgiven. The publication of the volume will be delayed ten days, in case you should do me the favour to suggest any alteration in the advertisement, or other change—I have the honour to be, dear Sir Walter, your faithful humble servant,

"ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE"

The last paragraph of this letter alludes to a little volume, into which Constable had collected the songs, mottoes, and other scraps of verse scattered over Scott's Novels, from Waverley to The Pirate. It had a considerable run, and, had it appeared sooner, might have saved Mr Adolphus the trouble of writing an essay to prove that the author of Waverley, whoever he might be, was a poet.

Constable, during his residence in England at this time, was in the habit of writing every week or two to Sir Walter, and his letters now before me are all of the same complexion as the preceding specimen. The ardent bookseller's brain seems to have been wellnigh unsettled at this period, and I have often thought that the foxglove which he then swallowed, his complaint being a threatening of water in the chest, might have had a share in the extravagant excitement of his mind. Occasionally, however, he enters on details as to which, or at least as to Sir Walter's share in them, there could not have been any mistake, and these were, it must be owned, of a nature well calculated to nourish and sustain in the author's fancy a degree of almost mad exultation, near akin to his publisher's own predominant mood. In a letter of the ensuing month, for example, after returning to the progress of Peveril of the Peak, under 10,000 copies of which, or nearly that number, Ballantyne's presses were now groaning, and glancing gaily to the prospect of their being kept regularly employed to the same extent until three other novels, as yet unchristened, had fol-

* Had Mr Constable quite forgotten the Lord of the Isles?

lowed Peveril, he adds a summary of what was then, had just been, or was about to be, the amount of occupation furnished to the same office by reprints of older works of the same pen—a “summary,” he exclaims, “to which I venture to say there will be no rival in our day!” And well might Constable say so, for the result is, that James Ballantyne and Co had just executed, or were on the eve of executing, by his order—

“A new edition of Sir W Scott’s Poetical Works, in 10 vols (miniature)			5,000 copies
“Novels and Tales, 12 vols ditto			5,000 —
“Historical Romances, 6 vols ditto			5,000 —
“Poetry from Waverley, &c, 1 vol 12mo			5,000 —
“Paper required			7,772 reams
“Volumes produced from Ballantyne’s press			145,000 “

To which we may safely add from 30,000 to 40,000 volumes more as the immediate produce of the author’s daily industry within the space of twelve months. The scale of these operations was, without question, enough to turn any bookseller’s wits,—Constable’s, in its soberest hours, was as inflammable a head-piece as ever sat on the shoulders of a poet, and his ambition, in truth, had been moving *pari passu*, during several of these last stirring and turmoiling years, with that of his poet. He, too, as I ought to have mentioned ere now, had, like a true Scotchman, concentrated his dreams on the hope of bequeathing to his heir the name and dignity of a lord of acres. He, too, had, considerably before this time, purchased a landed estate in his native county of Fife, he, too, I doubt not, had, while Abbotsford was rising, his own rural castle *in petto*, and, alas! for “Archibald Constable of Balmiel” also, and his overweening intoxication of worldly success, Fortune had already begun to prepare a stern rebuke.

Nigel was, I need not say, considered as ranking in the first class of Scott’s romances. Indeed, as a historical portraiture, his of James I stands forth pre-eminent, and almost alone, nor, perhaps, in reperusing these novels deliberately as a series, does any one of them leave so complete an impression as the picture of an age. It is, in fact, the best commentary on the old English drama—hardly a single picturesque point of manners touched by Ben Jonson and his contemporaries but has been dovetailed into this story, and all so easily and naturally, as to form the most striking contrast to the historical romances of authors who *cram*, as the schoolboys phrase it, and then set to work oppressed and bewildered with their crude and undigested burden.

The novel was followed in June by the dramatic sketch of Haldon Hill, but that had far inferior success. I shall say a word on it presently, in connection with another piece of the same order.

During April, May, and June of this year, Scott’s thoughts were much occupied with a plan for securing Melrose Abbey against the progress of decay, which had been making itself manifest to an alarming extent, and to which he had often before directed the attention of the Buccleuch family. Even in writing to persons who had never seen Melrose, he could not help touching on this business—for he wrote, as he spoke, out of the fulness of the heart. The young Duke readily concurred with his guardians in allowing the poet to direct such repairs as might seem to him

adequate ; and the result was extremely satisfactory to all the habitual worshippers of these classical runs

I return to the copious and candid correspondence from which it has been throughout my object to extract and combine the scattered fragments of an *autobiography*

To Miss Edgeworth, *Edgeworthstown*

"Abbotsford, 24th April, 1822.

"MY DEAR MISS EDGEWORTH,—

"I am extremely sorry indeed that you cannot fulfil your kind intentions to be at Abbotsford this year It is a great disappointment, and I am grieved to think it should have arisen from the loss of a valued relation That is the worst part of life when its earlier path is trod If my limbs get stiff, my walks are made shorter, and my rides slower, if my eyes fail me, I can use glasses and a large print, if I get a little deaf, I comfort myself that, except in a few instances, I shall be no great loser by missing one full half of what is spoken, but I feel the loneliness of age when my companions and friends are taken from me The sudden death of both the Boswells, and the bloody end of the last, have given me great pain * You have never got half the praise Vivian ought to have procured you The reason is, that the class from which the excellent portrait was drawn feel the resemblance too painfully to thank the author for it, and I do not believe the common readers understand it in the least I, who, thank God, am neither great man nor politician, have lived enough among them to recognize the truth and nature of the painting, and am no way implicated in the satire I begin to think that of the three kingdoms the English alone are qualified to mix in politics safely and without fatal results, the fierce and hasty resentments of the Irish, and the sullen, long-enduring, revengeful temper of my countrymen, make such agitations have a much wider and more dreadful effect amongst them Well, we will forget what we cannot help, and pray that we may lose no more friends till we find, as I hope and am sure we shall do, friends in each other I had arranged to stay at least a month after the 12th of May, in hopes of detaining you at Abbotsford, and I will not let you off under a month or two the next year I shall have my house completed, my library replaced, my armoury new furbished, my piper new clothed, and the time shall be July I trust I may have the same family about me, and perhaps my two sons Walter is at Berlin studying the great art of war—and entertaining a most military conviction that all

* James Boswell, of the Temple, editor of the last Variorum Shakspeare, &c, a man of considerable learning and admirable social qualities, died suddenly, in the prime of life, about a fortnight before his brother Sir Alexander Scott was warmly attached to them both, and the fall of the baronet might well give him a severe shock, for he had dined in Castle Street only two or three days before it occurred, and the merriest tones of his voice were still ringing in his friend's ears when he received the fatal intelligence That evening was, I think, the gayest I ever spent in Castle Street, and though Charles Matthews was present, and in his best force, poor Boswell's songs, jokes, and anecdotes had exhibited no symptom of eclipse It turned out that he had joined the party whom he thus delighted immediately after completing the last arrangements for his duel It may be worth while to add, that several circumstances of his death are *exactly* reproduced in the duel scene of St. Ronan's Well

the disturbances of Ireland are exclusively owing to his last regiment, the 18th Hussars, having been imprudently reduced. Little Charles is striving to become a good scholar and fit for Oxford. Both have a chance of being at home in autumn 1823. I know nothing I should wish you to see which has any particular chance of becoming invisible in the course of fourteen months, excepting my old bloodhound, poor fellow, on whom age now sits so heavily, that he cannot follow me far from the house. I wished you to see him very much—he is of that noble breed which Ireland, as well as Scotland, once possessed, and which is now almost extinct in both countries. I have sometimes thought of the final cause of dogs having such short lives, and I am quite satisfied it is in compassion to the human race, for if we suffer so much in losing a dog after an acquaintance of ten or twelve years, what would it be if they were to live double that time?

"I don't propose being in London this year, I do not like it—there is such a riding and driving—so much to see—so much to say—not to mention plovers' eggs and champagne—that I always feel too much excited in London, though it is good to rub off the rust too, sometimes, and brings you up abreast with the world as it goes. But I must break off, being summoned to a conclave to examine how the progress of decay, which at present threatens to destroy the ruins of Melrose, can yet be arrested. The Duke of Buccleuch, though but a boy, is very desirous to have something done, and his guardians have acquiesced in a wish so reasonable and creditable to the little chief. I only hope they will be liberal, for a trifle will do no good, or rather, I think, any partial tampering is likely to do harm. But the Duke has an immense estate, and I hope they will remember that though a moderate sum may keep up this national monument, yet his whole income could not replace it should it fall—Yours, dear Miss Edgeworth, with true respect and regard, **WALTER SCOTT**"

On the 12th of July, Sir Walter, as usual, left Edinburgh, but he was recalled within a week, by the business to which the following note refers,

To D Terry, Esq, London

"Edinburgh, 31st July, 1822

"MY DEAR TERRY,—

"I have not a moment to think my own thoughts or mind my own matters would you were here, for we are in a famous perplexity the motto on the St Andrew's Cross, to be presented to the King, is '*Rìgh Albainn gu brath*,' that is, 'Long Life to the King of Scotland' '*Rìgh gu brath*' would make a good motto for a button—the King for ever. I wish to have Montrose's sword down with the speed of light, as I have promised to let my cousin, the Knight-Marshal, have it on this occasion. Pray send it down by the mail-coach. I can add no more, for the whole of this work has devolved on my shoulders. If Montrose's sword is not quite finished, send it nevertheless*—Yours entirely, **W SCOTT**"

We have him here in the hot bustle of preparation for King George

* There is in the armoury at Abbotsford a sword presented by Charles I to the great Marquis of Montrose—with Prince Henry's arms and cypher on one side of the blade, and his own on the other. Sir Walter had sent it to Terry for a new sheath, &c

the Fourth's reception in Scotland, where his Majesty spent a fortnight in the ensuing August, as he had a similar period in Ireland the year before, immediately after his coronation. Before this time no Prince of the House of Hanover was known to have touched the soil of Scotland, except one, whose name had ever been held there in universal detestation—the cruel conqueror of Culloden,—“the butcher Cumberland.” Now that the very last dream of Jacobitism had expired with the Cardinal of York, there could be little doubt that all the northern Tories, of whatever shade of sentiment, would concur to give their lawful Sovereign a greeting of warm and devoted respect, but the feelings of the Liberals towards George IV personally had been unfavourably tinged, in consequence of several incidents in his history—above all, speaking of the mass of population addicted to that political creed, the unhappy dissensions and scandals which had terminated, as it were but yesterday, in the trial of his Queen. The recent asperities of the political press on both sides, and some even fatal results to which these had led, must also be taken into account. On the whole it was, in the opinion of cool observers, a very doubtful experiment which the new but not young King had resolved on trying. That he had been moved to do so in a very great measure, both directly and indirectly, by Scott, there can be no question; and I believe it will now be granted by all who can recall the particulars as they occurred, that his Majesty mainly owed to Scott's personal influence, authority, and zeal, the more than full realization of the highest hopes he could have indulged on the occasion of this northern progress.

Whether all the arrangements which Sir Walter dictated or enforced were conceived in the most accurate taste is a different question. It appeared to be very generally thought, when the first programmes were issued, that the Highlanders, their kilts, and their bagpipes, were to occupy a great deal too much space in every scene of public ceremony connected with the King's reception. With all respect and admiration for the noble and generous qualities which our countrymen of the Highland clans have so often exhibited, it was difficult to forget that they had always constituted a small and almost always an unimportant part of the Scottish population, and when one reflected how miserably their numbers had of late years been reduced in consequence of the selfish and hard-hearted policy of their landlords, it almost seemed as if there was a cruel mockery in giving so much prominence to their pretensions. But there could be no question that they were picturesque, and their enthusiasm was too sincere not to be catching; so that by-and-bye even the coolest-headed Sassenach felt his heart, like John of Argyll's, “warm to the tartan,” and high and low were in the humour, not only to applaud, but each, according to his station, to take a share in what might really be described as a sort of grand *Terrification* of the Holyrood chapters in Waverley, George IV, *anno ætatis* 60, being well contented to enact Prince Charlie, with the Great Unknown himself for his Baron Bradwardine, “*ad excuendas vel detrahendas caligas domini regis post battalliam*.”

But Sir Walter had as many parts to play as ever tasked the Protean genius of his friend Matthews, and he played them all with as much cordial energy as animated the exertions of any henchman or piper in

the company His severest duties, however, were those of stage manager, and under these I sincerely believe any other human being's temper and patience would very soon have given way The local magistrates, bewildered and perplexed with the rush of novelty, threw themselves on him for advice and direction about the merest trifles, and he had to arrange everything, from the ordering of a procession to the cut of a button and the embroidering of a cross Ere the green-room in Castle Street had dismissed provosts, and baillies, and deacon-conveners of the trades of Edinburgh, it was sure to be besieged by swelling chieftains, who could not agree on the relative positions their clans had occupied at Bannockburn, which they considered as constituting the authentic precedent for determining their own places, each at the head of his little theatrical *tail*, in the line of the King's escort between the Pier of Leith and the Canongate. It required all Scott's unwearied good-humour and imperturbable power of face to hear in becoming gravity the sputtering controversies of such fiery rivals, each regarding himself as a true potentate, the representative of princes as ancient as Bourbon, and no man could have coaxed them into decent co-operation, except him whom all the Highlanders, from the haughtiest MacIvor to the slyest Callum Beg, agreed in looking up to as the great restorer and blazoner of their traditional glories He had, however, in all this most delicate part of his administration an admirable assistant in one who had also, by the direction of his literary talents, acquired no mean share of authority among the Celts—namely, the late General David Stewart of Garth, author of the *History of the Highland Regiments* On Garth (seamed all over with the scars of Egypt and Spain) devolved the Toy-Captainship of the *Celtic Club*, already alluded to as an association of young civilians enthusiastic for the promotion of the philabeg, and he drilled and conducted that motley array in such style that they formed, perhaps, the most splendid feature in the whole of this plaided panorama But he, too, had a potent voice in the concave of rival chieftains, and, with the able backing of this honoured veteran, Scott succeeded finally in assuaging all their heats, and reducing their conflicting pretensions to terms of truce, at least, and compromise A ballad (now included in his works), wherein these magnates were most adroitly flattered, was widely circulated among them and their followers, and was understood to have had a considerable share of the merit in this peacemaking, but the constant hospitality of his table was a not less efficient organ of influence A friend coming in upon him as a detachment of Dunewassils were enjoying, for the first time, his *Cogge now the King's Come*, in his breakfast-parlour, could not help whispering in his ear, "You are just your own *Lundesay* in *Marmion*—*still thy verse hath charms*," and, indeed, almost the whole of the description thus referred to might have been applied to him when arranging the etiquettes of this ceremonial; for, among other persons in place and dignity who leaned to him for support on every question, was his friend and kinsman, the late worthy Sir Alexander Keith, Knight-Marshal of Scotland, and —

"Heralds and pursuivants by name
Bute, Islay, Marchmont, Rothesay came,
Attendant on a king at-arms,

Whose hand the armorial truncheon held,
That foudal strife had often quelled,

When wildest its alarms
He was a man of middle age,
In aspect manly, grave, and sage,
As on King's errand come,
But in the glances of his eye
A penetrating, keen, and sly
Expression found its home.
*Still is thy name in high account,
And still thy verse hath charms,*
SIR DAVID LINDESAY OF THE MOUNT,
LORD LYON KING-AT-ARMS "

About noon of the 14th of August, the royal yacht and the attendant vessels of war cast anchor in the Roads of Leith, but although Scott's ballad-prologue had entreated the clergy to "warstle for a sunny day," the weather was so unpropitious that it was found necessary to defer the landing until the 15th. In the midst of the rain, however, Sir Walter rowed off to the Royal George, and, says the newspaper of the day,—

"When his arrival alongside the yacht was announced to the King,—'What!' exclaimed his Majesty, 'Sir Walter Scott! The man in Scotland I most wish to see! Let him come up.' This distinguished baronet then ascended the ship, and was presented to the King on the quarter deck, where, after an appropriate speech in name of the ladies of Edinburgh, he presented his Majesty with a St. Andrew's cross in silver, which his fair subjects had provided for him. The King, with evident marks of satisfaction, made a gracious reply to Sir Walter, received the gift in the most kind and condescending manner, and promised to wear it in public, in token of acknowledgment to the fair donors."

To this record let me add that, on receiving the poet on the quarter-deck, his Majesty called for a bottle of Highland whiskey, and having drunk his health in this national liquor, desired a glass to be filled for him. Sir Walter, after draining his own bumper, made a request that the King would condescend to bestow on him the glass out of which his Majesty had just drunk his health, and this being granted, the precious vessel was immediately wrapped up and carefully deposited in what he conceived to be the safest part of his dress. So he returned with it to Castle Street; but, to say nothing at this moment of graver distractions, on reaching his house he found a guest established there of a sort rather different from the usual visitors of the time. The poet Crabbe, to whom he had been introduced when last in London by Mr Murray of Albemarle Street, after repeatedly promising to follow up the acquaintance by an excursion to the north, had at last arrived in the midst of these tumultuous preparations for the royal advent. Notwithstanding all such impediments, he found his quarters ready for him, and Scott entering, wet and hurried, embraced the venerable man with brotherly affection. The royal gift was forgotten,—the ample skirt of the coat within which it had been packed, and which he had hitherto held cautiously in front of his person, slipped back to its more usual position. He sat down beside Crabbe, and the glass was crushed to atoms. His scream and gesture made his wife conclude that he had sat down on a pair of scissors, or the like; but very little harm had been done except the breaking of the glass, of which alone he had been thinking. This was a damage not to

be repaired as for the scratch that accompanied it, its scar was of no great consequence, as even when mounting the "*cat-duth*, or battle garment" of the Celtic Club, he adhered, like his hero Waverley, to the *trews*

By six o'clock next morning, Sir Walter, arrayed in the "garb of old Gaul" (which he had of the Campbell tartan, in memory of one of his great-grandmothers), was attending a muster of these gallant Celts in the Queen Street Gardens, where he had the honour of presenting them with a set of colours, and delivered a suitable exhortation, crowned with their rapturous applause. Some members of the club, all of course in their full costume, were invited to breakfast with him. He had previously retired for a little to his library, and when he entered the parlour, Mr Crabbe, dressed in the highest style of professional neatness and decorum, with buckles in his shoes, and whatever was then considered as befitting an English clergyman of his years and station, was standing in the midst of half a dozen stalwart Highlanders, exchanging elaborate civilities with them in what was at least meant to be French. He had come into the room shortly before without having been warned about such company, and hearing the party conversing together in an unknown tongue, the polite old man had adopted, in his first salutation, what he considered as the universal language. Some of the Celts, on their part, took him for some foreign abbé or bishop, and were doing their best to explain to him that they were not the wild savages for which, from the startled glance he had thrown on their hirsute proportions, there seemed but too much reason to suspect he had taken them, others, more perspicacious, gave in to the thing for the joke's sake, and there was high fun when Scott dissolved the charm of their stammering, by grasping Crabbe with the one hand, and the nearest of these figures with the other, and greeted the whole group with the same hearty *good morning*.

Perhaps no Englishman of these recent days ever arrived in Scotland with a scantier stock of information about the country and the people than (judging from all that he said, and more expressively looked) this illustrious poet had brought with him in August, 1822. It seemed as if he had never for one moment conceived that the same island, in which his peaceful parsonage stood, contained actually a race of men, and gentlemen too, owning no affinity with Englishmen either in blood or in speech, and still proud in wearing, whenever opportunity served, a national dress of their own, bearing considerably more resemblance to an American Indian's than to that of an old-fashioned rector from the Vale of Belvoir. His eyes were opened wide—but they were never opened in vain—and he soon began, if not to comprehend the machinery which his host had called into motion on this occasion, to sympathize, at least, very warmly and amiably with all the enthusiasm that animated the novel spectacle before him.

I regret that having been on duty with a troop of yeomanry cavalry on the 15th of August, I lost the opportunity of witnessing Mr. Crabbe's demeanour when this magnificent scene was first fully revealed upon him. The whole aspect of the city and its vicinity was, in truth, as new to the inhabitants as it could have been even to the rector of Muston every height and precipice occupied by military of the regular army, or by de-

tachments of these more picturesque irregulars from beyond the Grampians, lines of tents, flags, and artillery circling Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags, and the Calton Hill, and the old black Castle, and its rock, wreathed in the smoke of repeated salvoes, while a huge banner-royal, such as had not waved there since 1745, floated and flapped over all, every street, square, garden, or open space below paved with solid masses of silent expectants, except only where glittering lines of helmets marked the avenue guarded for the approaching procession. All captiousness of criticism sank into nothing before the grandeur of this vision, and it was the same, or nearly so, on every subsequent day when the King chose to take part in the devised ceremonial. I forget where Sir Walter's place was on the 15th, but on one or other of these occasions I remember him seated in an open carriage, in the Highland dress, armed and accoutred as heroically as Garth himself (who accompanied him), and evidently in a most bardish state of excitement, while honest Peter Mathieson managed as best he might four steeds of a fiercer sort than he had usually in his keeping—though perhaps, after all, he might be less puzzled with them than with the cocked hat and regular London Jehu's flaven wig which he, for the first and last time, displayed during "the royal fortnight."

The first procession from Leith to Holyrood was marshalled in strict adherence, it must be admitted, to the poetical programme—

"Lord! how the pibrochs groan and yell!
Macdonnell's ta'en the field himsel',
Macleod comes branking o'er the fell—
Carle, now the King's come!"

But I must transcribe the newspaper record in its details, because no one could well believe, unless he had a specimen of these before him, the extent to which the *Waverley* and *Rob Roy animus* was allowed to pervade the whole of this affair

"Three Trumpeters Mid-Lothian Ycomanry Cavalry.
Squadron Mid Lothian Ycomanry
Two Highland Pipers
Captain Campbell, and Tail of Broadalbane.
Squadron Scots Greys
Two Highland Pipers
Colonel Stewart of Garth and Celtic Club
Sir Evan M'Gregor mounted on horseback, and Tail of M'Gicgor.
Herald mounted
Marischal trumpets mounted
A Marischal groom on foot
Three Marischal grooms abreast
Two Grooms { Six Marischal Esquires mounted, } Two Grooms
 { three abreast }
Henchman { Knight-Marischal mounted, with his } Henchman,
Groom { biton of office } Groom
Marischal rear-guard of Highlanders
Sheriff mounted
Sheriff officers
Deputy Lieutenants in green coats, mounted.
Two Pipers
General Graham Stirling, and Tail.
Barons of Exchequer.
Lord Clerk Register.

Lords of Justiciary and Sessions, in carriages.
 Marquis of Lothian, Lord Lieutenant, mounted.
 Two Heralds, mounted.

Glengarry mounted, and grooms
Young Glengarry and two supporters—Tail.
 Four Herald Trumpeters

White Rod, mounted, and equerries
 Lord Lyon Depute, mounted, and grooms.
 Earl of Errol, Lord High Constable, mounted.

Two Heralds, mounted
 Squadron Scots Greys
 Royal Carriage and Six, in which were, the Marquis of Graham
 Vice Chamberlain, Lord G. Beresford, Comptroller of the
 Household, Lord C. Bentinck, Treasurer of the House-
 hold, Sir R. H. Vivian, Equerry to the King, and
 two others of his Majesty's suite.
 Ten Royal Footmen, two and two
 Sixteen Yeomen, two and two

THE KING,

attended by the Duke of Dorset, Master of the Horse, and
 the Marquis of Winchester, Groom of the Stole

Sir Thomas Bradford and Staff

Squadron Scots Greys

Three Clans of Highlanders and banners

Two Squadrons of Mid-Lothian Yeomanry.

Grenadiers of 77th Regiment.

Two Squadrons Third Dragoon Guards

Band, and Scots Greys

Archers.

Archers

The King took up his residence, during his stay in his northern dominions, at Dalketh Palace, a noble seat of the Buccleuch family, within six miles of Edinburgh, and here his dinner party almost daily included Sir Walter Scott, who, however, appeared to have derived more deep-felt gratification from his Majesty's kind and paternal attention to his juvenile host (the Duke of Buccleuch was at that time only in his sixteenth year) than from all the flattering condescension he lavished on himself. From Dalketh the King repaired to Holyrood House two or three times, for the purposes of a *levee* or drawing-room. One Sunday he attended divine service in the Cathedral of St Giles, when the decorum and silence preserved by the multitudes in the streets struck him as a most remarkable contrast to the rapturous excitement of his reception on week days, and the scene was not less noticeable in the eyes of Crabbe, who says in his journal, "The silence of Edinburgh on the Sunday is in itself devout." Another very splendid day was that of a procession from Holyrood to the Castle, whereof the whole ceremonial had obviously been arranged under Scott's auspices, for the purpose of calling up, as exactly as might be, the time-hallowed observance of "the Riding of the Parliament." Mr Peel (then Secretary of State for the Home Department) was desirous of witnessing this procession privately instead of taking a place in it, and he walked up the High Street accordingly, in company with Scott, some time before the royal cavalcade was to get into motion. The poet was as little desirous of attracting notice as the Secretary, but he was soon recognized—and his companion, recently revisiting Scotland, expressed his lively remembrance of the enthusiastic veneration with which Scott's person was then greeted by all classes of his countrymen. When proposing Sir Wal-

ter's memory at a public dinner given to him in Glasgow, in December, 1836, Sir Robert Peel said, "I had the honour of accompanying his late Majesty as his Secretary of State, when he paid a visit to Edinburgh. I suppose there are many of you here who were present on that occasion, at that memorable scene, when the days of ancient chivalry were recalled, when every man's friendship seemed to be confirmed, when men met for the first time who had always looked to each other with distrust, and resolved, in the presence of their Sovereign, to forget their hereditary feuds and animosities. In the beautiful language of Dryden—

"Men meet each other with erected look—
The steps were higher than they took,
Friends to congratulate their friends would haste,
And long inveterate foes saluted as they pass'd."

"Sir Walter Scott took an active lead in these ceremonies. On the day on which his Majesty was to pass from Holyrood House, he proposed to me to accompany him up the High Street, to see whether the arrangements were completed. I said to him, 'You are trying a dangerous experiment—you will never get through in privacy.' He said, 'They are entirely absorbed in loyalty.' But I was the better prophet—he was recognized from the one extremity of the street to the other, and never did I see such an instance of national devotion expressed."

The King at his first *levée* diverted many, and delighted Scott, by appearing in the full Highland garb—the same brilliant *Stuart Tartans*, so called, in which certainly no Stuart, except Prince Charles, had ever before presented himself in the saloons of Holyrood. His Majesty's Celtic toilette had been carefully watched and assisted by the gallant Laird of Garth, who was not a little proud of the result of his dexterous manipulations of the royal plaid, and pronounced the King "a vera pretty man." And he did look a most stately and imposing person in that beautiful dress, but his satisfaction therein was cruelly disturbed, when he discovered, towering and blazing among and above the genuine Glengarries and Macleods and MacGregors, a figure even more portly than his own, equipped, from a sudden impulse of loyal ardour, in an equally complete set of the self same conspicuous Stuart tartans—

"He caught Sir William Curtis in a kilt—
While throng'd the chiefs of every Highland clan
To hail their brother, Vich Ian Alderman!"*

In truth, this portentous apparition cast an air of ridicule and caricature over the whole of Sir Walter's Celticized pageantry. A sharp little bailie from Aberdeen, who had previously made acquaintance with the worthy Guildhall baronet, and tasted the turtle-soup of his voluptuous yacht, tortured him, as he sailed down the long gallery of Holyrood, by suggesting that, after all, his costume was not quite perfect. Sir William, who had been rigged out, as the auctioneers' advertisements say, "regardless of expense," exclaimed that he must be mistaken, begged he would explain his criticism, and as he spoke threw a glance of admiration on a *shene dhu* (black knife), which, like a true "warrior and

* Byron's *Age of Bronze*.

hunter of deer," he wore stuck into one of his garters "Oo ay, oo ay" quoth the Aberdonian, "the knife's a' right, mon, but faar's your speen?" (where's your spoon?) Such was Scott's story, but whether he "gave it a cocked hat and walking-cane," in the hope of restoring the King's good-humour, so grievously shaken by this heroical *doppel-ganger*, it is not very necessary to inquire.

As in Hamlet, there was to be a play within the play, and, by his Majesty's desire, Mr Murray's company performed, in his presence, the drama of Rob Roy.

On the 24th of August the magistrates of Edinburgh entertained their Sovereign with a sumptuous banquet in the Parliament House, and upon that occasion also Sir Walter Scott filled a prominent station, having been invited to preside over one of the tables. But the most striking homagr (though apparently an unconscious one) that his genius received during this festive period was when his Majesty, after proposing the health of his hosts, the magistrates and corporation of the northern capital, rose and said there was one toast more, and but one, in which he must request the assembly to join him, "I shall simply give you," said he, "*The Chieftains and Clans of Scotland*, and prosperity to the Land of Cakes" So completely had this hallucination taken possession, that nobody seems to have been startled at the time by language which thus distinctly conveyed his Majesty's impression that the marking and crowning glory of Scotland consisted in the Highland clans and their chieftains.

Scott's early associations and the prime labours and honours of his life had been so deeply connected with the Highlands, that it was no wonder he should have taught himself to look on their clans and chiefs with almost as much affection and respect as if he had had more than a scantling of their blood in his veins. But it was necessary to be an eye-witness of this royal visit, in order to comprehend the extent to which he had allowed his imagination to get the mastery over him as to all these matters, and perhaps it was necessary to understand him thoroughly on such points, in his personal relations, feelings, and demeanour, before one could follow his genius to advantage in some of its most favoured and delightful walks of exertion. The strongest impression, however, which the whole affair left on my mind was that I had never till then formed any just notion of his capacity for practical dealing and rule among men. I do not think he had much in common with the statesmen and diplomatists of his own age and country, but I am mistaken if Scott could not have played in other days either the Cecil or the Gondomar, and I believe no man, after long and intimate knowledge of any other great poet, has ever ventured to say that he could have conceived the possibility of any such parts being adequately filled on the active stage of the world by a person in whom the powers of fancy and imagination had such predominant sway as to make him in fact live three or four lives habitually in place of one. I have known other literary men of energy perhaps as restless as his; but all such have been entitled to the designation of *busybodies*—busy almost exclusively about trifles, and above all, supremely and constantly conscious of their own remarkable activity, and rejoicing and glorying in it. Whereas Scott, neither in literary labour nor in continual contact with the affairs of the world, ever did seem aware that he was

making any very extraordinary exertion. The machine, thus gigantic in its impetus, moved so easily that the master had no perception of the obstructions it overcame—in fact, no measure for its power. Compared to him all the rest of the poet species that I have chanced to observe nearly, with but one glorious exception, have seemed to me to do little more than sleep through their lives, and at best to fill the sum with dreams; and I am persuaded that, taking all ages and countries together, the rare examples of indefatigable energy, in union with serene self-possession of mind and character, such as Scott's, must be sought for in the roll of great sovereigns or great captains, rather than in that of literary genius.

In the case of such renowned practical masters it has been usual to account for their apparent calmness amidst the stirring troubles of the world, by imputing to them callousness of the affections. Perhaps injustice has been done by the supposition, but at all events, hardly could any one extend it to the case of the placid man of the imaginative order—a great depicter of man and nature, especially, would seem to be, *ex vi termini*, a profound sympathizer with the passions of his brethren, with the weaknesses as well as with the strength of humanity. Such assuredly was Scott. His heart was as “ramm'd with life” (to use a phrase of Ben Jonson's) as his brain, and I never saw him tried in a tenderer point than he was during the full whirl of splendour and gaiety that seemed to make every brain but his dizzy in the Edinburgh of August, 1822.

Few things had ever given him so much pleasure as William Erskine's promotion to the Bench. It seemed to have restored his dearest friend to content and cheerfulness, and thus to have doubled his own sources of enjoyment. But Erskine's constitution had been shaken, before he attained this dignity, and the anxious delicacy of his conscience rendered its duties oppressive and overwhelming. In a feeble state of body, and with a sensitive mind stretched and strained, a silly calumny, set afoot by some envious gossip, was sufficient literally to chase him out of life. On his return to Edinburgh, about the 20th of July, Scott found him in visible danger, he did whatever friendship could do to comfort and stimulate him, but all was in vain. Lord Kinnedder survived his elevation hardly half a year, and who that observed Scott's public doings during the three or four weeks I have been describing, could have suspected that he was daily and nightly the watcher of a death-bed or the consoler of orphans, striving all the while against

“True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown”!

I am not aware that I ever saw him in such a state of dejection as he was when I accompanied him and his friend Mr. Thomas Thomson from Edinburgh to Queensferry, in attendance upon Lord Kinnedder's funeral. Yet that was one of the noisiest days of the royal festival, and he had to plunge into some scene of high gaiety the moment after he returned. As we halted in Castle Street, Mr. Crabbe's mild, thoughtful face appeared at the window, and Scott said, on leaving me, “Now for what our old friend there puts down as the crowning curse of his poor player in The Borough—

— “To hide in rant the heartache of the night.”

The very few letters that Sir Walter addressed to friends at a distance during the King's stay in Scotland are chiefly occupied with the calumny which proved fatal to Erskine; the pains which his friends took, at his request, to sift it to the bottom; their conviction that he had been charged with an improper *liaison*, without even a shadow of justice; and their ineffectual efforts to soothe his morbid sensibility. In one of these letters Scott says, "The legend would have done honour to the invention of the devil himself, especially the object (at least the effect) being to torture to death one of the most soft-hearted and sensitive of God's creatures. I think it was in his nature to like female society in general better than that of men; he had also, what might have given some slight shadow to these foul suspicions, an air of being particular in his attentions to women, a sort of Philandering which I used to laugh at him about. The result of a close investigation having been completely satisfactory, one would have thought the business at an end; but the shaft had hit the mark. At first, while these matters were going on, I got him to hold up his head pretty well, he dined with me, went to the play with my wife, got Court dresses for his daughters, whom Lady Scott was to present, and behaved, in my presence at least, like a man feeling indeed painfully, but bearing up as an innocent man ought to do. Unhappily I could only see him by snatches, the whole business of the reception was suddenly thrown on my hands, and with such a general abandonment, I may say, on all sides, that to work from morning till night was too little time to make the necessary arrangements. In the meantime, poor Erskine's nerves became weaker and weaker, he was by nature extremely sensitive, easily moved to smiles or tears, and deeply affected by all those circumstances in society to which men of the world become hardened; as, for example, formal introductions to people of rank, and so forth, he was unhappily haunted by the idea that his character, assailed as it had been, was degraded in the eyes of the public, and no argument could remove this delusion. At length fever and delirium came on, he was bled repeatedly and very copiously, a necessary treatment, perhaps, but which completely exhausted his weak frame. On the morning of Tuesday, the day of the King's arrival, he waked from his sleep, ordered his window to be opened that he might see the sun once more, and was a dead man immediately after. And so died a man whose head and heart were alike honourable to his kind, and died merely because he could not endure the slightest stain on his reputation. The present is a scene of great bustle and interest, but though I must act my part, I am not, thank God, obliged at this moment to write about it."

In another letter, of nearly the same date, Scott says.—"It would be rather difficult for any one who has never lived much among my good country-people, to comprehend that an idle story of a love intrigue, a story alike base and baseless, should be the death of an innocent man of high character, high station, and well advanced in years. It struck into poor Erskine's heart and soul, however, quite as cruelly as any similar calumny ever affected a modest woman—he withered and sank. There is no need that I should say peace be with him! If ever a pure spirit quitted this vale of tears it was William Erskine's. I must turn to and see what can be done about getting some pension for his daughters."

The following letter to his son Walter, now a lieutenant in the 15th Hussars, but not yet returned from his German travels, was written a few days later.—

“MY DEAREST WALTER,—

“This town has been a scene of such giddy tumult since the King’s coming, and for a fortnight before, that I have scarce had an instant to myself. For a long time everything was thrown on my hand, and even now, looking back, and thinking how many difficulties I had to reconcile, objections to answer, prejudices to smooth away, and purses to open, I am astonished that I did not fever in the midst of it. All, however, has gone off most happily, and the Edinburgh populace have behaved themselves like so many princes * * * * * You have heard of poor Lord Londonderry (Castlereagh’s) death by his own hand, in a fit of insanity. This explains a story he once told me of having seen a ghost, and which I thought was a very extraordinary narrative from the lips of a man of so much sense and steadiness of nerve. But no doubt he had been subject to aberrations of mind, which often create such phantoms.

“I have had a most severe personal loss in my excellent friend Lord Kinnedder, whose promotion lately rejoiced us so much. I leave you to judge what pain this must have given me, happening as it did in the midst of a confusion from which it was impossible for me to withdraw myself * * * * *

“All our usual occupations have been broken in upon by this most royal row. Whether Abbotsford is in progress or not I scarcely know, in short, I cannot say that I have thought my own thoughts or wrought my own work for at least a month past. The same hurry must make me conclude abruptly—Ever yours, most affectionately,

“WALTER SCOTT”

The ghost story to which the foregoing letter alludes, was this—Lord Castlereagh, when commanding, in early life, a militia regiment in Ireland, was stationed one night in a large desolate country house, and his bed was at one end of a long dilapidated room, while at the other extremity a great fire of wood and turf had been prepared within a huge gaping old-fashioned chimney. Waking in the middle of the night, he lay watching from his pillow the gradual darkening of the embers on the hearth, when suddenly they blazed up, and a naked child stepped from among them upon the floor. The figure advanced slowly towards Lord Castlereagh, rising in stature at every step, until on coming within two or three paces of his bed, it had assumed the appearance of a ghastly giant, pale as death, with a bleeding wound on the brow, and eyes glaring with rage and despair. Lord Castlereagh leaped from his bed, and confronted the figure in an attitude of defiance. It retreated before him, diminishing as it withdrew in the same manner that it had previously shot up and expanded; he followed it pace by pace, until the original childlike form disappeared among the embers. He then went back to his bed, and was disturbed no more. This story Lord Castlereagh told with perfect gravity at one of his wife’s supper parties in Paris in 1815, when Scott was among the hearers. I had often heard him repeat it—before the fatal catastrophe of August, 1822, afforded the solution in the

text—when he merely mentioned it as a singularly vivid dream, the product probably of a feverish night following upon a military debauch, but affording a striking indication of the courageous temper which proved true to itself even amidst the terrors of fancy.

Circumstances did not permit Sir Walter to fulfil his intention of being present at the public dinner given in Liverpool, on the 30th August, to Mr Canning, who on that occasion delivered one of the most noble of all his orations, and soon afterwards, instead of proceeding, as had been arranged, to take on him the supreme government of British India, was called to fill the place in the Cabinet which Lord Londonderry's calamitous death had left vacant. The King's stay in Scotland was protracted until the 29th of August. He then embarked from the Earl of Hope-toun's magnificent seat on the Firth of Forth, and Sir Walter had the gratification of seeing his Majesty, in the moment of departure, confer the honour of knighthood on two of his friends—both of whom, I believe, owed some obligation in this matter to his good offices—namely, Captain Adam Ferguson, Deputy-Keeper of the Records, and Henry Raeburn R.A., properly selected as the representative of the fine arts in Scotland. This amiable man and excellent artist, however, did not long survive the receipt of his title. Sir Henry died on the 6th of July, 1823—the last work of his pencil having been, as already mentioned, a portrait of Scott.

On the eve of the King's departure he received the following communication—

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart, &c, &c, Castle Street.

"Edinburgh, August 28, 1822

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"The King has commanded me to acquaint you, that he cannot bid adieu to Scotland without conveying to you individually his warm personal acknowledgments for the deep interest you have taken in every ceremony and arrangement connected with his Majesty's visit, and for your ample contributions to their complete success.

"His Majesty well knows how many difficulties have been smoothed, and how much has been affected by your unremitting activity, by your knowledge of your countrymen, and by the just estimation in which they hold you.

"The King wishes to make you the channel of conveying to the Highland chiefs and their followers, who have given to the varied scene which we have witnessed so peculiar and romantic a character, his particular thanks for their attendance, and his warm approbation of their uniform deportment. He does justice to the ardent spirit of loyalty by which they are animated, and is convinced that he could offer no recompense for their services so gratifying to them as the assurance, which I now convey, of the esteem and approbation of their Sovereign.

"I have the honour to be, my dear sir, with great truth, most truly and faithfully yours,

"ROBERT PEELE"

Sir Walter forwarded copies of Mr Peel's paragraph touching the Highlanders to such heads of clans as had been of late in his councils, and he received very grateful letters in return from Macleod, Glengarry,

Sir Evan MacGregor, and several others of the order, on their return to the hills—as also from the Countess, now Duchess-Countess, of Sutherland, whose son, Lord Francis, had, as she playfully expressed it, “been out” as her representative at the head of the most numerous and best appointed of all the kilted detachments. Glengarry was so delighted with what the Secretary of State had said, that the paragraph in question soon found its way to the newspapers, and then there appeared, in some Whig journal, a sarcastic commentary upon it, insinuating that, however highly the King might now choose to eulogize the poet and his Celtic allies, his Majesty had been considerably annoyed with much of their arrangements and proceedings, and that a visible coolness had, in fact, been manifested towards Sir Walter during the King’s stay in the north. As this idle piece of malice has been revived in some formal biographies of recent date, I may as well dispose of it for ever, by extracting the following notes, which passed in the course of the next month between Scott and the Secretary of the Admiralty, whose official duty, I presume, it was to be in waiting at Ramsgate when the King disembarked from his yacht—The “Dean Cannon” to whom these notes allude was a clerical humourist, Dean of a fictitious order, who sat to Mr Theodore Hook for the jolly “Rector of Fiddle-cum-Pipes” in his novel of “Maxwell”

To J W Croker, Esq, M P, Admiralty, London

“Abbotsford, Thursday

“MY DEAR CROKER,—

“What have you been doing this fifty years? We had a jolly day or two with your Dean Cannon at Edinburgh. He promised me a call if he returned through the Borders, but, I suppose, passed in the midst of the royal turmoil, or, perhaps, got tired of sheep’s head and haggis in the Pass of Killiecrankie. He was wrong if he did, for even Win Jenkins herself discovered that where there were heads there must be bodies, and my forest haunch of mutton is no way to be sneezed at.—Ever yours,

“WALTER SCOTT”

To Sir Walter Scott, Bart, Abbotsford

“Admiralty, Sept 29, 1822

“MY DEAR SCOTT,—

“I wish it were ‘fifty years since’ you had heard of me, as, perhaps, I should find myself by-and-bye celebrated, like the Baron of Bradwardine and some other friends of ‘sixty years since’

“I have not seen our Dean since his Scotch tour. I am sorry he was with you in such a period of bustle, as I should have liked to hear his sober observations on the usual style of Edinburgh society

“I had the honour of receiving his Majesty on his return, when he, after the first three words, began most graciously to tell me ‘all about our friend Scott’ Some silly or malicious person, his Majesty said, had reported that there had been some coolness between you, but, he added, that it was utterly false, and that he was, in every respect, highly pleased and gratified, and, he said, *grateful* for the devoted attention you had paid him, and he celebrated very warmly the success that had attended all your arrangements

“Peel has sung your praises to the same tune; and I have been

flattered to find that both the King and Peel thought me so much your friend that they, as it were, reported to me the merit of 'my friend Scott.'
—Yours ever,
"J. W. CROKER."

If Sir Walter lost something in not seeing more of Dean Cannon—who, among other social merits, sang the Ballads of Robin Hood with delightful skill and effect—there was a great deal better cause for regret in the unpropitious time selected for Mr Crabbe's visit to Scotland. In the glittering and tumultuous assemblages of that season, the elder bard was (to use one of his friend's favourite similitudes) very like a cow in a *freemid loaning*, and though Scott could never have been seen in colours more likely to excite admiration, Crabbe had hardly any opportunity of observing him in the every-day loveliness of his converse. Sir Walter's enthusiastic excitement about the kilts and the processions seemed at first utterly incomprehensible to him, but by degrees he caught not a little of the spirit of the time, and even indited a set of stanzas, which I have perhaps no other merit than that of reflecting it. He also perceived and appreciated Scott's dexterous management of prejudices and pretensions. He exclaims, in his journal,—“What a keen discriminating man is my friend!” But I shall ever regret that Crabbe did not see him at Abbotsford among his books, his trees, and his own good simple peasants. They had, I believe, but one quiet walk together, and it was to the ruins of St Anthony's Chapel and Muschat's Cairn, which the deep impression made on Crabbe by the Heart of Midlothian had given him an earnest wish to see. I accompanied them, and the hour so spent, in the course of which the fine old man gave us some most touching anecdotes of his early struggles, was a truly delightful contrast to the bustle and worry of miscellaneous society which consumed so many of his few hours in Scotland. Scott's family were more fortunate than himself in this respect. They had from infancy been taught to reverence Crabbe's genius, and they now saw enough of him to make them think of him ever afterwards with tender affection.

Though Mr Crabbe found it necessary to leave Scotland without seeing Abbotsford, this was not the case with many less celebrated friends from the south, who had flocked to Edinburgh at the time of the royal festival. Sir Walter's house was, in his own phrase, “like a *cried fair*” during several weeks after the King's departure, and as his masons were then in the highest activity upon the addition to the building, the bustle and tumult within doors and without was really perplexing. We shall find him confessing that the excitement of the Edinburgh scenes had thrown him into a fever, and that he never needed repose more. He certainly never had less of it.

Nor was an unusual influx of English pilgrims the only legacy of “the glorious days” of August. A considerable number of persons who had borne a part in the ceremonies of the King's reception fancied that their exertions had entitled them to some substantial mark of royal approbation; and post after post brought long-winded despatches from these clamorous enthusiasts, to him who, of all Scotchmen, was supposed to enjoy, as to matters of this description, the readiest access to the fountain of honour. To how many of these applications he accorded more than a

civil answer I cannot tell, but I find that the Duke of York was too good a *Jacobite* not to grant favourable consideration to his request, that one or two poor half-pay officers who had distinguished themselves in the van of the *Celts*, might be, as opportunity offered, replaced in Highland regiments, and so reinvested with the untheatrical "garb of old Gaul."

Sir Walter had also a petition of his own. This related to a certain gigantic piece of ordnance, celebrated in the history of the Scottish Jameses under the title of Mons Meg, and not forgotten in Drummond's *Macaronics*,

—Sicuti Mons Megga crackasset,—

which had been removed from Edinburgh Castle to the Tower of London after the campaign of 1745. When Scott next saw the King, after he had displayed his person on the chief bastion of the old fortress, he lamented the absence of Mons Meg on that occasion in language which his Majesty could not resist. There ensued a correspondence with the official guardians of Meg—among others, with the Duke of Wellington, then Master-General of the Ordnance, and though circumstances deferred her restoration, it was never lost sight of, and took place finally when the Duke was Prime Minister, which I presume smothered petty obstacles, in 1828.

But the serious petition was one in which Sir Walter expressed feelings in which I believe every class of his fellow-countrymen were disposed to concur with him very cordially—and certainly none more so than the generous King himself. The object which the poet had at heart was the restoration of the Scottish peerages forfeited in consequence of the insurrections of 1715 and 1745, and the honourable families, in whose favour this liberal measure was soon afterwards adopted, appear to have vied with each other in the expression of their gratefulness for his exertions on their behalf.

In the next letter to Terry, Scott refers to the death of an amiable friend of his, Mr James Wedderburne, Solicitor-General for Scotland, which occurred on the 7th November, and we have an indication that *Peveril of the Peak* had reached the fourth volume, in the announcement of the subject for *Quentin Durward*.

"I got all the plans safe, and they are delightful. The library ceiling will be superb, and we have plenty of ornaments for it without repeating one of those in the eating-room. The plan of shelves is also excellent, and will, I think, for a long time suffice my collection. * * * *

"I have not been very well—a depression of spirits arising from the loss of friends (to whom I am now to add poor Wedderburne) have annoyed me much, and *Peveril* will, I fear, smell of the apoplexy. I propose a good rally, however, and hope it will be a powerful effect. My idea is, *entre nous*, a Scotch archer in the French King's Guard, *tempore* Louis XI, the most picturesque of all times. Always yours very faithfully,

"WALTER SCOTT"

This letter contains the first allusion to the species of malady that ultimately proved fatal to Sir Walter Scott. He, as far as I know, never mentioned to any one of his family the symptoms which he here speaks of, but long before any serious apoplectic seizure occurred, it had been suspected by myself, and by others of his friends, that he had sustained slight attacks of that nature, and concealed them.

The depression of spirits of which he complains could not, however, have hung over him long; at least it by no means interrupted any of his usual occupations. A grievous interruption had indeed been occasioned by the royal visit, its preparations, and its legacy of visitants and correspondence; but he now laboured to make up his lee-way, and Peveril of the Peak was completed, and some progress had also been achieved with the first volume of *Quentin Durward*, before the year reached its close. Nor had he ceased to contemplate future labour and continued popularity with the same firmness and hopefulness as ever. He had in the course of October completed his contract, and received Constable's bills for another unnamed "work of fiction," and this was the last such work in which the great bookseller of Edinburgh was destined to have any concern. The engagement was in fact that redeemed three years afterwards by *Woodstock*.

Peveril of the Peak appeared in January, 1823. Its reception was somewhat colder than that of its three immediate predecessors. The post-haste rapidity of the novelist's execution was put to a severe trial from his adoption of so wide a canvas as was presented by a period of twenty busy years, and filled by so very large and multifarious an assemblage of persons, not a few of them, as it were, struggling for prominence. Fenella was an unfortunate conception—what is good in it is not original, and the rest extravagantly absurd and incredible. Even worse was that condescension to the practice of vulgar romancers, in his treatment of the trial scenes—scenes usually the very citadels of his strength—which outraged every feeling of probability with those who had studied the terrible tragedies of the Popish Plot, in the authentic records of, perhaps, the most disgraceful epoch in our history. The story is clumsy and perplexed, the catastrophe (another signal exception to his rules) foreseen from the beginning, and yet most artificially brought about. All this is true, and yet might not criticisms of the same sort be applied to half the masterpieces of Shakespeare? And did any dramatist—to say nothing of any other novelist—ever produce, in spite of all the surrounding bewilderment of the fable, characters more powerfully conceived, or, on the whole, more happily portrayed, than those—I name but a few—of Christian, Bridgenorth, Buckingham, and Chuffinch—sketches more vivid than those of Young Derby, Colonel Blood, and the keeper of Newgate?

Among the lounging young barristers of those days, Sir Walter Scott, in the intervals of his duty as clerk, often came forth and mingled much in the style of his own coeval Mountain. Indeed, the pleasure he seemed to take in the society of his professional juniors was one of the most remarkable, and certainly not the least agreeable features of his character at this period of his consummate honour and celebrity, but I should rather have said, perhaps, of young people generally, male or female, law or lay, gentle or simple. I used to think it was near of kin to another feature in him, his love of a bright light. It was always, I suspect, against the grain with him when he did not even work at his desk with the sun full upon him. However, one morning, soon after Peveril came out, one of our most famous wags (now famous for better things), namely, Mr Patrick Robertson, commonly called by the endearing Scottish diminutive

'Peter,' observed that tall comical white head advancing above the crowd towards the fireplace, where the usual roar of fun was going on among the briefless, and said, "Hush, boys, here comes old Peveril, I see *the Peak*." A laugh ensued, and the Great Unknown, as he withdrew from the circle after a few minutes' gossip, insisted that I should tell him what our joke upon his advent had been. When enlightened, being by that time half-way across "the babbling hall," towards his own *Division*, he looked round with a sly grin, and said between his teeth, "Ay, ay, my man, as weel Peveril o' the Peak ony day as Peter o' the Panich" (paunch) — which being transmitted to the brethren of the *stove school*, of course delighted all of them, except their portly Coryphæus. But *Peter's* application stuck, to his dying day Scott was in the Outer House *Peveril of the Peak*, or *Old Peveril*, and by-and-bye, like a good Cavalier, he took to the designation kindly. He was well aware that his own family and younger friends constantly talked of him under this *sobriquet*. Many a little note have I had from him (and so probably has *Peter* also), reproving, or perhaps encouraging Tory mischief, and signed, "Thine, PEVERIL." Specimens enough will occur by-and-bye, but I may as well transcribe one here, doggerel though it be. Calling at my house one forenoon, he had detected me in writing some nonsense for Blackwood's *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, and after he went home, finding an apology from some friend who had been expected to dine with a Whiggish party that day in Castle Street, he dispatched this billet —

To J G Lockhart, Esq., Northumberland Street.

"Irrecoverable sinner,
Work what Whigs you please till dinner,
But be here exact at six,
Smooth as oil with mine to mix
(Sophy may step up to tea,
Our table has no room for *she*)
Come (your *gum* within your cheek)
And help sweet

"PEVERIL OF THE PEAK"

It was, perhaps, some inward misgiving towards the complete Peveril, that determined Scott to break new ground in his next and, as he had before awakened a fresh interest by venturing on *Edinburgh scenery and history*, try the still bolder experiment of a contr excursion. However this may have been, he was encouraged strengthened by the return of his friend, Mr Skene, about this from a tour in France, in the course of which he had kept an accurate and lively journal, and executed a vast variety of clever drawings, sending landscapes and ancient buildings, such as would have been sure to interest Scott had he been the companion of his wanderings. Mr Skene's MS collections were placed at his disposal, and he took one of their chapters the substance of the *original Introduction* to *the Durward*. Yet still his difficulties in this new undertaking frequent, and of a sort to which he had hitherto been a stranger member observing him many times in the Advocates' Library, over maps and gazetteers with care and anxiety, and the following one of many similar notes which his bookseller and printer received during the progress of the novel.—

"Castle Street, 23rd Jan, 1823

"MY DEAR CONSTABLE,—

"It is a vile place this village of Plessis les Tours, that can baffle both you and me. It is a place famous in history, and, moreover, is, as your gazetteer assures us, a village of 1,000 inhabitants, yet I have not found it in any map, provincial or general, which I have consulted. I think something must be found in Malte Brun's Geographical Works. I have also suggested to Mr Cadell that Wraxall's History of France, or his Travels, may probably help us. In the meantime I am getting on, and instead of description holding the place of sense, I must try to make such sense as I can find hold the place of description.

"I know Hawkwood's story;* he was originally, I believe, a tailor in London, and became a noted leader of Condottieri in Italy.

"I shall be obliged to Mr David † to get from the Advocates' Library, and send me, the large copy of Philip de Comines, in 4to. I returned it, intending to bring mine from Abbotsford, but left it in a hurry; and the author is the very key to my period—Yours, "WALTER SCOTT."

He was much amused with a mark of French admiration which reached him (opportunately enough) about the same time—one of the few such that his novels seem to have brought him prior to the publication of *Quentin Durward*. I regret that I cannot produce the letter to which he alludes in the next of these notes, but I have by no means forgotten the excellent flavour of the champagne which soon afterwards arrived at Abbotsford, in a quantity greatly more liberal than had been stipulated for.

"Castle Street, 26th February, 1823

"MY DEAR CONSTABLE,—

"I send you a letter which will amuse you. It is a funny Frenchman who wants me to accept some champagne for a set of my works. I have written in answer that as my works cost me nothing, I could not think of putting a value on them, but that I should apply to you to send him by the mediation of Hurst and Robinson a set of my children and god-children (poems and novels), and if he found on seeing them that they were worth a dozen flasks of champagne, he might address the case to Hurst and Robinson, and they would clear it at the custom-house and send it down.

"Pray return the enclosed as a sort of curiosity. Yours, &c,
"WALTER SCOTT"

A compliment not less flattering than this Frenchman's tender of champagne was paid to Scott within a few weeks of the appearance of

* Hawkwood—from whose adventures Constable had thought the author of *Quentin Durward* might take some hints—began life as apprentice to a London tailor. But, as Fuller says, "he soon turned his needle into a sword, and his thimble into a shield," and raised himself to knighthood in the service of Edward III. After accumulating great wealth and fame in the predatory wars of Italy, he died in 1393, at Florence, where his funeral was celebrated with magnificence amidst the general lamentations of the people.—See "*The Honourable Prentice, or the Life and Death of Sir John Hawkwood*," &c. London 4to 1615.

† Mr David Constable, eldest son of the great bookseller, had been called to the Bar at Edinburgh.

Peveril In the Epistle Introductory of that novel, Captain Clutterbuck amuses Dr. Jonas Dryasdust with an account of a recent visit from their common parent, "the author of Waverley," whose outward man, as it was in those days, is humorously caricatured with a suggestion that he had probably sat to Geoffrey Crayon for his Stout Gentleman of No II, and who is made to apologize for the heartiness with which he pays his duty to the viands set before him, by alleging that he was in training for the approaching anniversary of the Roxburghe Club, whose gastronomical zeal had always been on a scale worthy of their bibliomaniacal renown. "He was preparing himself," said the gracious and portly *Erdolon*, "to hob-nob with the lords and the literary treasures of Althorpe and Hodnet in Madeira negus, brewed by the classical Dibdin"—[why *negus*?]—"to share those profound debates which stamp accurately on each 'small volume, dark with tarnished gold,' its collar, not of SS, but RR—to toast the immortal memory of Caxton, Valdarfer, Pynson, and the other fathers of that great art which has made all and each of us what we are." This drollery in fact alluded not to the Roxburghe Club, but to an institution of the same class which was just at this time springing into life, under Sir Walter's own auspices, in Edinburgh—the *Bannatyne Club*—of which he was the founder and first president. The heroes of the Roxburghe, however, were not to penetrate the mystification of Captain Clutterbuck's report, and from their jovial and erudite board, when they next congregated around its "generous flasks of Burgundy, each flanked by an ancient uncut fifteener"—(so I think their reverend chronicler has somewhere depicted the apparatus)—the following despatch was forwarded —

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"The death of Sir M. M. Sykes, Bart, having occasioned a vacancy in our ROXBURGHE CLUB, I am desired to request that you will have the goodness to make that fact known to the AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY, who, from the *Prologue* to PEVERIL OF THE PEAK, seems disposed to become one of the members thereof, and I am further desired to express the wishes of the said CLUB that the said AUTHOR may succeed to the said Baronet. I am ever most sincerely yours, "T. F. DIBDIN, V. P."

Sir Walter's answers to this, and to a subsequent letter of the Vice-President announcing his formal election, were as follows.—

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I was duly favoured with your letter, which proves one point against the unknown author of Waverley—namely, that he is certainly a Scotchman, since no other nation pretends to the advantage of second sight. Be he who or where he may, he must certainly feel the very high honour which has selected him, *nomine umbra*, to a situation so worthy of envy.

"As his personal appearance in the fraternity is not like to be a speedy event, one may presume he may be desirous of offering some token of his gratitude in the shape of a reprint, or suchlike kickshaw, and for this purpose you had better send me the statutes of your learned body, which I will engage to send him in safety.

"It will follow as a characteristic circumstance, that the table of the

Roxburghe, like that of King Arthur, will have a vacant chair, like that of Banquo at Macbeth's banquet. But if this author, who 'hath fernseed and walketh invisible,' should not appear to claim it, before I come to London (should I ever be there again), with permission of the Club, I, who have something of adventure in me, although a knight like Sir Andrew Aguecheek, 'dubbed with unhacked rapier, and on carpet consideration,' would, rather than lose the chance of a 'dinner with the Roxburghe Club, take upon me the adventure of the *siege perilous*, and reap some amends for perils and scandals into which the invisible champion has drawn me, by being his *locum tenens* on so distinguished an occasion.

"It will be not uninteresting to you to know, that a fraternity is about to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club, but, having Scottish antiquities chiefly in view, it is to be called the Bannatyne Club, from the celebrated antiquary, George Bannatyne, who compiled by far the greatest Record of old Scottish poetry. The first meeting is to be held on Thursday, when the health of the Roxburghe Club will be drunk. I am always, my dear sir, your most faithful humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT."

"Abbotsford, May 1, 1823

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I am duly honoured with your very interesting and flattering communication. Our Highlanders have a proverbial saying, founded on the traditional renown of Ingil's Dog: 'If it is not Bran,' they say, 'it is Bran's brother.' Now, this is always taken as a compliment of the first class, whether applied to an actual cur, or parabolically to a biped; and, upon the same principle, it is with no small pride and gratification that I hear the Roxburghe Club have been so very flatteringly disposed to accept me as a *locum tenens* for the unknown author whom they have made the child of their adoption. As sponsor, I will play my part until the real Simon Pure make his appearance.

"Besides, I hope the devil does not owe me such a shame. Mad Tom tells us that 'the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman,' and this mysterious personage will, I hope, partake as much of his honourable feelings as of his invisibility, and, retaining his incognito, permit me to enjoy, in his stead, an honour which I value more than I do that which has been bestowed on me by the credit of having written any of his novels.

"I regret deeply I cannot soon avail myself of my new privileges; but Courts, which I am under the necessity of attending officially, sit down in a few days, and, *hæc mihi* do not arise for vacation until July. But I hope to be in town next spring, and certainly I have one strong additional reason for a London journey, furnished by the pleasure of meeting the Roxburghe Club. Make my most respectful compliments to the members at their next merry meeting, and express, in the warmest manner, my sense of obligation.—I am always, my dear sir, very much your most obedient servant,

"WALTER SCOTT."

In his way of taking both the Frenchman's civilities and those of the Roxburghers we see evident symptoms that the mask had begun to be worn rather carelessly. He would not have written this last letter, I

faney, previous to the publication of Mr Adolphus's Essays on the Authorship of Waverley

Sir Walter, it may be worth mentioning, was also about this time elected a member of "THE CLUB"—that famous one established by Johnson, Burke, and Reynolds at the Turk's Head, but which has now for a long series of years held its meetings at the Thatched House in St James's Street. Moreover, he had been chosen, on the death of the antiquary Lysons, Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy—a chair originally founded at Dr Johnson's suggestion, "in order that *Goldsmith* might have a right to be at their dinners," and in which Goldsmith has had several illustrious successors besides Sir Walter. I believe he was present at more than one of the festivals of each of these fraternities. A particular dinner of the Royal Academy, at all events, is recorded with some picturesque details in his essay on the life of his friend John Kemble, who sat next him on that occasion.

The Bannatyne Club was a child of his own, and from first to last he took a most fatherly concern in all its proceedings. His practical sense dictated a direction of their funds widely different from what had been adopted by the Roxburghe. Their *Club Books* already constitute a very curious and valuable library of Scottish history and antiquities: their example has been followed with not inferior success by the Mantland Club of Glasgow, which was soon afterwards instituted on a similar model, and of which also Sir Walter was a zealous associate, and since his death a third club of this class, founded at Edinburgh in his honour, and styled *The Abbotsford Club*, has taken a still wider range, not confining their printing to works connected with Scotland, but admitting all materials that can throw light on the ancient history or literature of any country anywhere described or discussed by the author of Waverley.

At the meetings of the Bannatyne he regularly presided from 1823 to 1831, and in the chair on their anniversary dinners, surrounded by some of his oldest and dearest friends—Thomas Thomson (the Vice-President), John Clerk (Lord Eldon), the Chief Commissioner Adam, the Chief Baron Shepherd, Lord Jeffrey, Mr Constable, and let me not forget his kind, intelligent, and industrious ally, Mr David Laing, bookseller, the secretary of the club, he from this time forward was the unfailing source and centre of all sorts of merriment "within the limits of becoming mirth." Of the origin and early progress of their institution the reader has a full account in his reviewal of Pitcairn's *Ancient Criminal Trials* of Scotland, the most important work as yet edited for the Bannatyne press,* and the last edition of his *Poems* includes his excellent song composed for their first dinner—that of March 9, 1823—and then sung by James Ballantyne, and heartily chorused by all the aforesaid dignitaries.

"Assist me, ye friends of old books and old wine,
To sing in the praises of Sage Bannatyne,
Who left such a treasure of old Scottish lore
As enables each age to print one volume more,
One volume more, my friends—one volume more,
We'll ransack old Banny for one volume more"—&c.

* See Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. xxi. p. 199.

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

"On the morning after that first Bannatyne Club dinner, Scott sent such of the Waverley MSS as he had in Castle Street to Mr. Constable, with this note.—

"DEAR CONSTABLE,—

"You, who have so richly endowed my little collection, cannot refuse me the pleasure of adding to yours I beg your acceptance of a parcel of MSS, which I know your partialities will give more value to than they deserve, and only annex the condition that they shall be scrupulously concealed during the author's life, and only made forthcoming when it may be necessary to assert his right to be accounted the writer of these novels.

"I enclose a note to Mr. Guthrie Wright, who will deliver to you some others of those MSS which were in poor Lord Kinnedder's possession, and a few more now at Abbotsford which I can send in a day or two, will, I think, nearly complete the whole, though there may be some leaves missing I hope you are not the worse of our very merry party yesterday.—Ever yours truly,

"WALTER SCOTT"

Various passages in Scott's correspondence have recalled to my recollection the wonder with which the friends best acquainted with the extent of his usual engagements observed, about this period, his readiness in mixing himself up with the business of associations far different from the Bannatyne Club. I cannot doubt that his conduct as President of the Royal Society, and as manager of the preparations for the King's visit, had a main influence in this matter. In both of these capacities he had been thrown into contact with many of the most eminent of his fellow-citizens, who had previously seen little of him personally, including several, and those of especial consequence, who had been accustomed to flavour all their notions of him with something of the gall of local partisanship in politics. The inimitable mixture of sagacity, discretion and gentleness which characterized all his intercourse with mankind was soon appreciated by the gentlemen to whom I allude; for not a few of them had had abundant opportunities of observing and lamenting the case with which ill humours are engendered, to the disturbance of all really useful discussion, wherever social equals assemble in conclave, without having some official preces, uniting the weight of strong and quick intellect, with the calmness and moderation of a brave spirit, and mirably qualified to contend with the difficulties of such a situation. Presumption, dogmatism, and arrogance shrank from the overawing contrast of his modest greatness, the poison of every little passion was shamed and neutralized beneath the charitable dignity of his penetration, and jealousy, fretfulness, and spleen felt themselves transmuted in the placid atmosphere of good sense, good humour, and good manners. And whoever might be apt to plead off on the score of harassing and engrossing personal duty of any sort, Scott had always leisure as well as temper at command, when invited to take part in any business connected with any rational hope of public advantage. These things opened, like the discovery of some new and precious element of wealth, upon certain eager spirits

who considered the Royal Society as the great local parent and minister of practical inventions and mechanical improvements, and they found it no hard matter to inspire their genial chief with a warm sympathy in not a few of their then predominant speculations. He was invited, for example, to place himself at the head of a new company for improving the manufacture of oil gas, and in the spring of this year began to officiate regularly in that capacity. Other associations of a like kind called for his countenance, and received it. The fame of his ready zeal and happy demeanour grew and spread, and from this time, until bodily infirmities disabled him, Sir Walter occupied, as the most usual, acceptable, and successful chairman of public meetings of almost every conceivable sort, apart from politics, a very prominent place among the active citizens of his native town. Any foreign student of statistics who should have happened to peruse the files of an Edinburgh newspaper for the period to which I allude, would, I think, have concluded that there must be at least two Sir Walter Scotts in the place, one the miraculously fertile author whose works occupied two-thirds of its literary advertisements and critical columns, another some retired magistrate or senator of easy fortune and indefatigable philanthropy, who devoted the rather oppressive leisure of an honoured old age to the promotion of patriotic ameliorations, the watchful guardianship of charities, and the ardent patronage of educational institutions.

The reader will perceive in the correspondence to which I must return, hints about various little matters connected with Scott's own advancing edifice on Tweedside, in which he may trace the President of the Royal Society and the Chairman of the Gas Company.

Thus, on the 14th of February, he recurs to the plan of heating interiors by steam, and proceeds with other topics of a similar class —

To D Terry, Esq, London

"DEAR TERRY,—

"I will not fail to send Mr Atkinson, so soon as I can get it, a full account of Mr Holdsworth of Glasgow's improved use of steam, which is in great acceptance. Being now necessarily sometimes with men of science, I hear a great deal of these matters, and, like Don Diego Snapshot with respect to Greek, though I do not understand them, I like the sound of them. I have got a capital stove, proved and exercised by Mr Robinson,* who is such a mechanical genius as his father, the celebrated professor, for the lower part of the house, with a communication for ventilating in the summer. Moreover, I have got for one or two of the rooms a new sort of bell, which I think would divert you. There is neither wire nor crank of any kind; the whole consisting of a tube of tin, such as is used for gas, having at one extremity a cylinder of wider dimensions, and in the other a piece of light wood. The larger cylinder, suppose an inch and a half in diameter, terminates in the apartment, and, ornamented as you please, is the handle, as it were, of the bell. By pressing a piston down into this upper and wider cylinder, the air through the tube, to a distance of a hundred feet if necessary, is suddenly

* Mr John Robinson, son of the author of "Elements of Mechanical Philosophy," &c Secretary of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

compressed, which compression throws out the light piece of wood, which strikes the bell. The power of compression is exactly like that of the Bramah patent—the acting element being air instead of water. The bell may act as a telegraph by sinking once, twice, thrice, or so forth. The great advantage, however, is, that it never can go out of order, needs no cranks, or pulleys, or wires, and can be contorted into any sort of twining or turning which convenience of communication may require, being simply an air-tight tube. It might be used to communicate with the stable, and I think of something of that kind, with the porter's lodge, with the gardener's house. I have a model now in the room with me. The only thing I have not explained is, that a small spring raises the piston B when pressed down. I wish you would show this to Mr Atkinson: if he has not seen it, he will be delighted. I have tried it on a tube of fifty feet, and it never fails, indeed *cannot*. It may be called the *ne plus ultra* of bell-ringing—the pea-gun principle, as one may say. As the bell is stationary, it might be necessary, were more than one used, that a little medallion should be suspended in such a manner as to be put in vibration, so as to show the servant which bell has been struck.—I think we have spoke of wellnigh all the commodities wanted at Conundrum Castle worth mentioning. Still there are the carpets.

"I have no idea my present labours will be dramatic in situation as to character, that of Louis XI, the sagacious, perfidious, superstitious, jocular, and politic tyrant, would be, for a historical chronicle, containing *his life and death*, one of the most powerful ever brought on the stage—
Yours truly, "W. SCOTT"

A few weeks later he says to the same correspondent—"I must not omit to tell you that my gas establishment is in great splendour, and working, now that the expense of the apparatus is in a great measure paid, very easily and very cheaply. In point of economy, however, it is not so effective, for the facility of procuring it encourages to a great profusion of light: but then a gallon of the basest train oil, which is used for preference, makes a hundred feet of gas, and treble that quantity lights the house in the state of an illumination for the expense of about 3s 6d. In our new mansion we should have been ruined with sperm-oil and wax candles, yet had not one-tenth part of the light. Besides, we are entirely freed from the great plague of cleaning lamps, &c. There is no smell whatever, unless a valve is left open, and the gas escapes unconsumed, in which case the scent occasions its being instantly discovered. About twice a week the gas is made by an ordinary labourer, under occasional inspection of the gardener. It takes about five hours to fill the reservoir gasometer. I never saw an invention more completely satisfactory in the results."

I cannot say that Sir Walter's "century of inventions" at Abbotsford turned out very happily. His new philosophical *ne plus ultra* of bells was found in the sequel a poor succedaneum for the old-fashioned mechanism of the simple wire, and his application of gas-light to the interior of a dwelling-house was in fact attended with so many inconveniences, that ere long all his family heartily wished it had never been thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter had deceived himself as to the expense of such an

apparatus when maintained for the uses of a single domestic establishment. He easily made out that his gas *per se* cost him less than the wax, oil, and tallow requisite to produce an equal quantity of light would have done, but though he admitted that no such quantity of artificial light was necessary either for comfort or splendour, nor would ever have been dreamt of had its supply been to come from the chandler's store, "the state of an illumination" was almost constantly kept up. Above all, he seems to have, by some trickery of the imagination, got rid in his estimate of all memory of the very considerable sum expended on the original fabric and furnishing of his gasometer, and lining wall upon wall with so many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of feet of delicate pipe work,—and, in like manner, to have counted for nothing the fact that he had a workman of superior character employed during no slender portion of every year in the manufacture. He himself, as has been mentioned before, delighted at all times in a strong light, and was not liable to much annoyance from the delicacy of his olfactory nerves. To the extremes of heat and cold, too, he was nearly indifferent. But the blaze and glow, and occasional odour of gas, when spread over every part of a private house, will ever constitute a serious annoyance for the majority of men, still more so of women, and in a country place where skilful repair, in case of accident, cannot be immediately procured, the result is often a misery. The effect of the new apparatus in the dining-room at Abbotsford was at first superb. In sitting down to table, in autumn, no one observed that in each of three chandeliers (one of them being of very great dimensions) there lurked a little tiny bead of red light. Dinner passed off, and the sun went down, and suddenly, at the turning of a screw, the room was filled with a gush of splendour worthy of the palace of Aladdin, but, as in the case of Aladdin, the old lamp would have been better in the upshot. Jewelry sparkled, but cheeks and lips looked cold and wan in this fierce illumination, and the eye was wearied, and the brow ached, if the sitting was at all protracted. I confess, however, that my chief enmity to the whole affair arises from my conviction that Sir Walter's own health was damaged, in his latter years, in consequence of his habitually working at night under the intense and burning glare of a broad star of gas, which hung, as it were, in the air, immediately over his writing-table.

At the close of this year Sir Walter heard of the death of his dear brother Thomas Scott, whose son had been for two years domesticated with him at Abbotsford, and the rest of that family were soon afterwards his guests for a considerable time. Among other visitants of the same season were Miss Edgeworth and her sisters, Harriet and Sophia. After spending a few weeks in Edinburgh, and making a tour into the Highlands, they gave a fortnight to Abbotsford, and thenceforth the correspondence between Scott and the most distinguished of contemporary novelists was of that confiding and affectionate character which we have seen largely exemplified in his intercourse with Joanna Baillie.

CHAPTER XXI.

QUENTIN DURWARD PUBLISHED—MISS EDGEWORTH AT ABBOTSFORD—
PUBLICATION OF ST RONAN'S WELL—REDGAUNTLET PUBLISHED—
CHRISTMAS AT ABBOTSFORD

IN June, 1823, Quentin Durward was published, and surpassing as its popularity was eventually, Constable, who was in London at the time, wrote in cold terms of its immediate reception.

Very shortly before the bookseller left Edinburgh for that trip, he had concluded another bargain (his last of the sort) for the purchase of Waverley copyrights—acquiring the author's property in *The Pirate*, *Nigel Peveril*, and also Quentin Durward, out and out, at the price of five thousand guineas. He had thus paid for the copyright of novels (over and above the half-profits of the early separate editions) the sum of £22,500, and his advances upon "works of fiction" still in embryo, amounted at this moment to £10,000 more. He began, in short, and the wonder is that he began so late, to suspect that the process of creation in a collective form may probably have had a share in opening his eyes to the fact that the voluminousness of an author is anything but favourable to the rapid diffusion of his works as library books—the great object with any publisher who aspires at founding a solid fortune. But he merely intimated on this occasion that he thought the pecuniary transactions between Scott and himself had gone to such an extent that, considering the usual chances of life and health, he must decline contracting for any more novels until those for which his house had already advanced money (or at least bills) should have been written.

Scott himself appears to have admitted for a moment the suspicion that he had been overdoing in the field of romance, and opened to Constable the scheme of a work on popular superstitions, in the form of dialogue, for which he had long possessed ample materials in his thorough mastery of perhaps the most curious library of *diablerie* that ever man collected. But before Constable had leisure to consider this proposal in all its bearings, Quentin Durward, from being, as Scott expressed it, *frost-bitten*, had emerged into most fervid and flourishing life. In fact, the sensation which this novel, on its first appearance, created in Paris, was extremely similar to that which attended the original Waverley in Edinburgh, and Irvinhoe afterwards in London. For the first time Scott had ventured on foreign ground, and the French public, long wearied of the pompous tragedians and feeble romancers, who had alone striven to bring out the ancient history and manners of their country in popular forms, were seized with a fever of delight when Louis XI and Charles the Bold started into life again at the beck of the Northern Magician. Germany had been fully awake to his merits years before, but the public there

also felt their sympathies appealed to with hitherto unmatched strength and effect. The infection of admiration ran far and wide on the Continent, and soon reacted most potently upon Britain.

The result of Quentin Durward, as regards the contemporary literature of France, and thence of Italy and the Continent generally, would open a field for ample digression. As concerns Scott himself, the rays of foreign enthusiasm speedily thawed the frost of Constable's unwonted misgivings, the Dialogues on Superstition, if he ever began them, were very soon dropped, and the novelist resumed his pen. He had not sunk under the short-lived frown, for he wrote to Ballantyne, on first ascertaining that a damp was thrown on his usual manufacture—

“The mouse who only trusts to one poor hole
Can never be a mouse of any soul,”

and, while his publisher yet remained irresolute as to the plan of Dialogues, threw off, with unabated energy, his excellent Essay on Romance, for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, and I cannot but consider it as another display of his high self-reliance that, though he well knew to what influence Quentin owed its ultimate success in the British market, he, the instant he found himself encouraged to take up the trade of story-telling again, sprang back to Scotland—nay, voluntarily encountered new difficulties by selecting the comparatively tame and unpicturesque realities of modern manners in his native province.

A conversation, which much interested me at the time, had, I fancy, some share at least in this determination. As he, Lairdlaw, and myself were lounging on our ponies, one fine calm afternoon, along the brow of the Eldon Hill where it overhangs Melrose, he mentioned to us gaily the *row*, as he called it, that was going on in Paris about Quentin Durward, and said, “I can’t but think that I could make better play still with something German.” Lairdlaw grumbled at this, and said, like a true Scotchman, “Na, na, sir—take my word for it, you are always best, like Helen MacGiegor, when your foot is on your native heath, and I have often thought that if you were to write a novel, and lay the scene *here* in the very year you were writing it, you would exceed yourself.” “Hame’s hame,” quoth Scott, smiling, “be it ever sae hamely. There’s something in what you say, Willie. What, suppose I were to take Captain Clutterbuck for a hero, and never let the story step a yard beyond the village below us yonder?” “The very thing I want,” said Lairdlaw, “stick to Melrose in July, 1823.” “Well, upon my word,” he answered, “the field would be quite wide enough—and *what for no?*”—(This pet phrase of Meg Dods was a *Lairdlawism*.)—Some fun followed about the different real persons in the village that might be introduced with comical effect, but as Lairdlaw and I talked and laughed over our worthy neighbours, his air became graver and graver, and he at length said, “Ay, ay, if one could look into the heart of that little cluster of cottages, no fear but you would find materials enow for tragedy as well as comedy. I undertake to say there is some real romance at this moment going on down there—that, if it could have justice done to it, would be well worth all the fiction that was ever spun out of human brains.” He then told us a tale of dark domestic guilt which had recently come under his

notice as Sheriff, and of which the scene was not Melrose, but a smaller hamlet on the other side of the Tweed, full in our view, but the details were not of a kind to be dwelt upon—anything more dreadful was never conceived by Crabbe, and he told it so as to produce on us who listened all the effect of another *Hall of Justice*. It could never have entered into his head to elaborate such a tale, but both Laidlaw and I used to think that this talk suggested St Ronan's Well, though my good friend was by no means disposed to accept that as payment in full of his demand, and from time to time afterwards would give the Sheriff a little poking about Melrose in July.

Before Sir Walter settled to the new novel, he received Joanna Baillie's long-promised Collection of Poetical Miscellanies, in which appeared his own dramatic sketch of Macduff's Cross. When Halidon Hill first came forth, there were not wanting reviewers who hailed it in a style of rapture, such as might have been expected had it been a *Macbeth*. But this folly soon sunk, and I only mention it as an instance of the extent to which reputation bewilders and confounds even persons who have good brains enough when they find it convenient to exercise them. The second attempt of the class produced no sensation whatever at the time, and both would have been long since forgotten, but that they came from Scott's pen. They both contain some fine passages, Halidon Hill has, indeed, several grand ones. But, on the whole, they always seemed to me most egregiously unworthy of Sir Walter, and, now that we have before us his admirable Letters on Dramatic Composition to Allan Cunningham, it appears doubly hard to account for the rashness with which he committed himself in even such slender attempts on a species of composition, of which, in his cool hour, he so fully appreciated the difficult demands. Nevertheless, I am very far from agreeing with those critics who have gravely talked of Halidon Hill, and Macduff's Cross, and the still more unfortunate Doom of Devorgoil, as proving that Sir Walter could not have succeeded in the drama, either serious or comic. It would be as fair to conclude, from the abortive fragment of the Vampyre, that Lord Byron could not have written a good novel or romance in prose. Scott threw off these things *currente calamo*, he never gave himself time to consider beforehand what could be made of their materials, nor bestowed a moment on correcting them after he had covered the allotted quantity of paper with blank verse, and neither when they were new, nor ever after, did he seem to attach the slightest importance to them.

Miss Baillie's volume contained several poems by Mrs Hemans, some *jeux d'esprit* by the late Miss Catherine Fanshawe, a woman of rare wit and genius, in whose society Scott greatly delighted, and, *inter alia*, Mr William Howison's early ballad of Polydore, which had been originally published, under Scott's auspices, in the Edinburgh Annual Register for 1810.

The next month, August, 1823, was one of the happiest in Scott's life. Never did I see a brighter day at Abbotsford than that on which Miss Edgeworth first arrived there—never can I forget her look and accent when she was received by him at his archway, and exclaimed, "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have had wit enough to dream!" The weather was beautiful, and the edifice, and its appurte-

nances, were all but complete, and day after day, so long as she could remain, her host had always some new plan of gaiety. One day there was fishing on the Cauldshiel Loch, and a dinner on the heathy bank. Another the whole party feasted by Thomas the Rhymer's waterfall in the glen, and the stone on which Maria that day sat was ever afterwards called *Edgeworth's Stone*. A third day we had to go farther afield. He must needs show her, not Newark only, but all the upper scenery of the Yarrow, where "fair hangs the apple frae the rock," and the baskets were unpacked about sunset, beside the ruined chapel overlooking St Mary's Loch, and he had scrambled to gather bluebells and heath-flowers, with which all the young ladies must twine their hair, and they sang and he recited until it was time to go home beneath the softest of harvest moons. Thus a fortnight was passed, and the vision closed, for Miss Edgeworth never saw Abbotsford again during his life, and I am very sure she could never bear to look upon it now that the spirit is fled.

Another honoured and welcome guest of the same month was Mr J L Adolphus, the author of the *Letters to Heber*, and I am enabled to enrich these pages with some reminiscences of that visit, the first of several he paid to Abbotsford, which this gentleman has been so kind as to set down for my use, and I am sure for the gratification of all my readers. After modestly recounting the circumstances which led to his invitation to Abbotsford, my friendly contributor says —

"With great pleasure and curiosity, but with something like awe, I first saw this celebrated house emerge from below the plantation which screened it from the Selkirk and Melrose road. Antique as it was in design, it had not yet had time to take any tint from the weather, and its whole complication of towers, turrets, galleries, cornices, and quaintly ornamented mouldings looked fresh from the chisel, except where the walls were enriched with some really ancient carving or inscription. As I approached the house there was a busy sound of masons' tools, the shrubbery before the windows was strewn with the works of the carpenter and stone-cutter, and with grotesque antiquities, for which a place was yet to be found, on one side were the beginnings of a fruit and flower garden, on another, but more distant, a slope bristling with young firs and larches, near the door murmured an unfinished fountain.

"I had seen Sir Walter Scott, but never met him in society before this visit. He received me with all his well-known cordiality and simplicity of manner. The circumstances under which I presented myself were peculiar, as the only cause of my being under his roof was one which could not without awkwardness be alluded to while a strict reserve existed on the subject of the *Waverley* novels. This, however, did not create any embarrassment, and he entered into conversation as if anything that might have been said with reference to the origin of our acquaintance had been said an hour before. I have since been present at his first reception of many visitors, and upon such occasions, as indeed upon every other, I never saw a man who in his intercourse with all persons was so perfect a master of courtesy. His manners were so plain and natural, and his kindness took such immediate possession of the feelings, that this excellence in him might for a while pass almost unobserved. I cannot pay a higher testimony to it than by owning that I first fully

appreciated it from his behaviour to others. His air and aspect, at the moment of a first introduction, were placid, modest, and, for his time of life, venerable. Occasionally, where he stood a little on ceremony, he threw into his address a deferential tone, which had in it something of old-fashioned politeness, and became him extremely well.

"A point of hospitality in which Sir Walter Scott never failed, whatever might be the pretensions of the guest, was to do the honours of conversation. When a stranger arrived he seemed to consider it as much a duty to offer him the resources of his mind as those of his table, taking care, however, by his choice of subjects to give the visitor an opportunity of making his own stores, if he had them, available. I have frequently observed this—with admiration both of his powers and of his discriminating kindness. To me, at the time of my first visit, he addressed himself often as to a member of his own profession, and, indeed, he seemed always to have a real pleasure in citing from his own experience as an advocate and a law officer. The first book he recommended to me for an hour's occupation in his library was an old Scotch pamphlet of the trial of Philip Stanfield (published also in the English State Trials), a dismal and mysterious story of murder, connected slightly with the politics of the time of James II., and having in it a taste of the marvellous.

"It would, I think, be extremely difficult to give a just idea of his general conversation to any one who had not known him. Considering his great personal and literary popularity, and the wide circle of society in which he had lived, it is perhaps remarkable that so few of his sayings, real or imputed, are in circulation. But he did not affect sayings, the points and sententious turns, which are so easily caught up and transmitted, were not natural to him, though he occasionally expressed a thought very pithily and neatly. For example, he once described the Duke of Wellington's style of debating as 'slicing the argument into two or three parts, and helping himself to the best.' But the great charm of his 'table-talk' was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed, always, however, guided by good sense and taste, the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions, and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described; and all that he spoke derived so much of its effect from undefinable felicities of manner, look, and tone, and sometimes from the choice of apparently insignificant words, that a moderately faithful transcript of his sentences would be but a faint image of his conversation.

"At the time of my first and second visits to Abbotsford, in 1823 and 1824, his health was less broken, and his spirits more youthful and buoyant, than when I afterwards saw him, in the years from 1827 to 1831. Not only was he inexhaustible in anecdote, but he still loved to exert the talent of dramatizing, and in some measure representing in his own person the incidents he told of or the situations he imagined. I recollect, for instance, his sketching in this manner (it was, I think, *à propos* to some zoological discussion with Mr William Stewart Rose) a tailor trying to persuade a monkey to speak, and vowing, with all kinds of whimsical oaths, that he would not tell of him.* On the evening of

* Mr Rose was at this time meditating his entertaining little *jeu d'esprit*, entitled "Anecdotes of Monkeys."

my first arrival, he took me to see his 'wild man,' as he called him, the celebrated Tom Purdie, who was in an outhouse, unpacking some Indian idols, weapons, and carved work, just arrived from England. The better to exhibit Tom, his master played a most amusing scene of wonder, impatience, curiosity, and fear lest anything should be broken or the candle fall into the loose hay of the packages, but all this with great submission to the better judgment of the factotum, who went on gravely breaking up and unpapering after his own manner, as if he had been sorting some toys for a restless child. Another specimen of his talent for representation, which struck me forcibly about the same time, was his telling the story, related in his *Letters on Demonology*, of a dying man who, in a state of delirium, while his nurse was absent, left his room, appeared at a club of which he was president, and was taken for his own ghost. In relating this not very likely story, he described with his deep and lingering tones, and with gestures and looks suited to each part of the action, the sick man, deadly pale and with vacant eyes, walking into the club-room, the silence and consternation of the club, the supposed spectre moving to the head of the table, giving a ghastly salutation to the company, raising a glass towards his lips, stiffly turning his head from side to side, as if pledging the several members, his departure, just at midnight, and the breathless conference of the club, as they recovered themselves from this strange visit. *St Ronan's Well* was published soon after the telling of this story, and I have no doubt that Sir Walter had it in his mind in writing one of the last scenes of that novel.

"He read a play admirably well, distinguishing the speeches by change of tone and manner, without naming the characters. I had the pleasure of hearing him recite, shortly before it was published, his own spirited ballad of *Bonny Dundee*, and never did I listen to more 'eloquent music.' This was in one of the last years of his life, but the lines—

" 'Away to the hills, to the caves, to the rocks!
Ere I own a usurper, I'll couch with the fox!'"

could not, in his most vigorous days, have been intoned with more fire and energy.

"In conversation he sometimes added very strikingly to the ludicrous or pathetic effect of an expression by dwelling on a syllable—*holding the note*, as it would have been called in music. Thus I recollect his telling with an extremely droll emphasis, that once, when a boy, he was *cuffed* by his aunt for singing—

" 'There's nre repentance in my heart,
The fiddle's in my arms!'"*

"No one who has seen him can forget the surprising power of change which his countenance showed when awakened from a state of composure. In 1823, when I first knew him, the hair upon his forehead was quite grey, but his face, which was healthy and sanguine, and the hair about it, which had still a strong reddish tinge, contrasted rather than harmonized with the sleek silvery locks above—a contrast which might seem

* These lines are from the old ballad, "*Macpherson's Lament*," the ground-work of Burns' glorious *Macpherson's Farewell*. See *Scott's Miscellaneous Prose Works*, vol. xvii. p. 259.

rather suited to a jovial and humorous than to a pathetic expression. But his features were equally capable of both. The form and hue of his eyes (for the benefit of minute physiognomists it should be noted that the pupils contained some small specks of brown) were wonderfully calculated for showing great varieties of emotion. Their mournful aspect was extremely earnest and affecting, and, when he told some dismal and mysterious story, they had a doubtful, melancholy, exploring look, which appealed irresistibly to the hearer's imagination. Occasionally when he spoke of something very audacious or eccentric, they would dilate and light up with a tragic-comic, harebrained expression, quite peculiar to himself, one might see in it a whole chapter of *Cœur-de-lion* and the Clerk of Copmanhurst. Never, perhaps, did a man go through all the gradations of laughter with such complete enjoyment, and a countenance so radiant. The first dawn of a humorous thought would show itself sometimes as he sat silent by an involuntary lengthening of the upper lip, followed by a shy sidelong glance at his neighbours, indescribably whimsical, and seeming to ask from their looks whether the spark of drollery should be suppressed or allowed to blaze out. In the full tide of mirth he did indeed 'laugh the heart's laugh,' like Walpole, but it was not boisterous and overpowering, nor did it check the course of his words, he could go on telling or descanting while his lungs did 'crow like chanticleer,' his syllables in the struggle growing more emphatic, his accent more strongly Scotch, and his voice plaintive with excess of merriment.

"The habits of life at Abbotsford, when I first saw it, ran in the same easy, rational, and pleasant course which I believe they always afterwards took, though the family was at this time rather straitened in its arrangements, as some of the principal rooms were not finished. After breakfast Sir Walter took his short interval of study in the light and elegant little room afterwards called Miss Scott's. That which he occupied when Abbotsford was complete, though more convenient in some material respects, seemed to me the least cheerful* and least private in the house. It had, however, a recommendation which, perhaps, he was very sensible of, that, as he sat at his writing-table, he could look out at his young trees. About one o'clock he walked or rode, generally with some of his visitors. At this period he used to be a good deal on horseback, and a pleasant sight it was to see the gallant old gentleman, in his seal-skin cap and short green jacket, lounging along a field-side on his mare, Sybil Gray, and pausing now and then to talk, with a serio-comic look, to a labouring man or woman, and rejoice them with some quaint saying, in broad Scotch. The dinner hour was early, the sitting after dinner was hospitably but not immoderately prolonged, and the whole family party (for such it always seemed, even if there were several visitors) then met again for a short evening, which was passed in conversation and music. I once heard Sir Walter say, that he believed there was a 'pur' of cards (such was his antiquated expression) somewhere in the house—but probably there is no tradition of their having ever been used. The drawing-room and library (unfurnished at the time of my first visit) opened into each other, and formed a beautiful evening apartment. By every one

* It is, however, the only sitting room in the house that looks southward.

who has visited at Abbotsford they must be associated with some of the most delightful recollections of his life. Sir Walter listened to the music of his daughters, which was all congenial to his own taste, with a never-failing enthusiasm. He followed the fine old songs which Mrs Lockhart sang to her harp with his mind, eyes, and lips, almost as if joining in an act of religion. To other musical performances he was a dutiful, and often a pleased listener, but I believe he cared little for mere music, the notes failed to charm him if they were not connected with good words, or immediately associated with some history or strong sentiment, upon which his imagination could fasten. A similar observation might, I should conceive, apply to his feeling of other arts. I do not remember any picture or print at Abbotsford which was remarkable merely as a work of colour or design. All, I think, either represented historical, romantic, or poetical subjects, or related to persons, places, or circumstances in which he took an interest. Even in architecture his taste had the same bias. almost every stone of his house bore an allusion or suggested a sentiment.

"It seemed at first a little strange, in a scene where so many things brought to mind the Waverley novels, to hear no direct mention of them or even allusion to their existence. But as forbearance on this head was a rule on which a complete tacit understanding subsisted, there was no embarrassment or appearance of mystery on the subject. Once or twice I have heard a casual reference made, in Sir Walter's presence, to some topic in the novels, no surprise or appearance of displeasure followed, but the conversation, so far as it tended that way, died a natural death. It has, I believe, happened that he himself has been caught unawares on the forbidden ground. I have heard it told by a very acute observer, not now living, that on his coming once to Abbotsford, after the publication of *The Pirate*, Sir Walter asked him, 'Well, and how is our friend Kemble? glorious John!' and then, recollecting, of course, that he was talking Claude Harlow, he checked himself, and could not for some moments recover from the false step. Had a man been ever so prone to indiscretion on such subjects, it would have been unpardonable to betray it towards Sir Walter Scott, who (beside all his other claims to respect and affection) was himself cautious, even to meekness, of hazarding an inquiry or remark which might appear to be an intrusion upon the affairs of those with whom he conversed. It may be observed, too, that the publications of the day were by no means the staple of conversation at Abbotsford, though they had their turn, and with respect to his own works Sir Walter did not often talk even of those which were avowed. If he ever indulged in anything like egotism, he loved better to speak of what he had done and seen than of what he had written.

"After all, there is perhaps hardly a secret in the world which has not its safety-valve. Though Sir Walter abstained strictly from any mention of the Waverley novels, he did not scruple to talk, and that with great zest, of the plays which had been founded upon some of them, and the characters, as there represented. Soon after our first meeting, he described to me, with his usual dramatic power, the death-bed scene of 'the original Dandie Dinmont,'* of course referring, ostensibly at least, to the *opera*

* See Note to *Guy Mannering*, *Waverley Novels*, vol. iv p. 242

of Guy Mannering. He dwelt with extreme delight upon Mackay's performances of the Baillie and Domnie Sampson, and appeared to taste them with all the fresh and disinterested enjoyment of a common spectator. I do not know a more interesting circumstance in the history of the Waverley novels than the pleasure which their illustrious author thus received, as it were at the rebound, from those creations of his own mind which had so largely increased the enjoyments of all the civilized world.

"In one instance only did he, in my presence, say or do anything which seemed to have an intentional reference to the novels themselves, while they were yet unacknowledged. On the last day of my visit in 1823, I rode out with Sir Walter and his friend Mr. Rose, who was then his guest and frequent companion in these short rambles. Sir Walter led us a little way down the left bank of the Tweed, and then into the moors by a track called the Girth Road, along which, he told us, the pilgrims from that side of the river used to come to Melrose. We traced upward, at a distance, the course of the little stream called the Elland, Sir Walter, as his habit was, pausing now and then to point out anything in the prospect that was either remarkable in itself or associated with any interesting recollection. I remember, in particular, his showing us, on a distant eminence, a dreary lone house, called the Hawk's Nest, in which a young man, returning from a fair with money, had been murdered in the night and buried under the floor, where his remains were found after the death or departure of the inmates. The fact was simple enough in itself, but, related in his manner, it was just such a story as should have been told by a poet on a lonely heath. When we had ridden a little time on the moors, he said to me rather pointedly, 'I am going to show you something that I think will interest you,' and presently, in a wild corner of the hills, he halted us at a place where stood three small ancient towers, or castellated houses, in ruins, at short distances from each other. It was plain, upon the slightest consideration of the topography, that one (perhaps any one) of these was the tower of Glendearg, where so many romantic and marvellous adventures happen in *The Monastery*. While we looked at this forlorn group, I said to Sir Walter that they were what Burns called 'ghost-alluring edifices.' 'Yes,' he answered, carelessly, 'I dare say there are many stories about them.' As we returned, by a different route, he made me dismount and take a footpath through a part of Lord Somerville's grounds, where the Elland runs through a beautiful little valley, the stream winding between level borders of the brightest green-sward, which narrow or widen as the steep sides of the glen advance or recede. The place is called the Fairy Dean, and it required no *cicerone* to tell that the glen was that in which Father Eustace, in *The Monastery*, is intercepted by the White Lady of Avenel."

Every friend of Sir Walter's must admire particularly Mr. Adolphus's truly exquisite description of his laugh, but, indeed, every word of these memoranda is precious.

In September, the Highland Society of Scotland, at the request of the late Sir Henry Stewart of Allanton, sent a deputation to his seat in Lanarkshire, to examine and report upon his famous improvements in the art of transplanting trees. Sir Walter was one of the committee

appointed for this business, and he took a lively interest in it; as witness the *Essay on Landscape Gardening*,* which, whatever may be the fate of Sir Henry Stewart's own writings, will transmit his name to posterity. Scott made several Allantonian experiments at Abbotsford, but found reason in the sequel to abate somewhat of the enthusiasm which his *Essay* expresses as to the *system*. The question, after all, comes to pounds, shillings, and pence—and, whether Sir Henry's accounts had or had not been accurately kept, the thing turned out greatly more expensive on Tweedside than he had found it represented in Clydesdale.

I accompanied Sir Walter on this little expedition, in the course of which we paid several other visits, and explored not a few ancient castles in the upper regions of the Tweed and the Clyde. Even while the weather was most unpropitious, nothing could induce him to remain in the carriage when we approached any ruined or celebrated edifice. If he had never seen it before, his curiosity was like that of an eager strip-lung, if he had examined it fifty times, he must renew his familiarity, and gratify the tenderness of youthful reminiscences. While on the road his conversation never flagged—story suggested story, and ballad came upon ballad in endless succession. But what struck me most was the apparently omnivorous grasp of his memory. That he should recollect every stanza of any ancient ditty of chivalry or romance that had once excited his imagination, could no longer surprise me, but it seemed as if he remembered everything without exception, so it were in anything like the shape of verse, that he had ever read. For example, the morning after we had left Allanton, we went across the country to breakfast with his friend Cranstoun (Lord Corchouse), who accompanied us in the same carriage, and his lordship happening to repeat a phrase, remarkable only for its absurdity, from a magazine poem of the very silliest feebleness, which they had laughed at when at college together, Scott immediately began at the beginning, and gave it us to the end, with apparently no more effort than if he himself had composed it the day before. I could after this easily believe a story often told by Hogg, to the effect that, lamenting in Scott's presence his having lost his only copy of a long ballad composed by him in his early days, and of which he then could recall merely the subject, and one or two fragments, Sir Walter forthwith said, with a smile, "Take your pencil, Jemmy, and I'll dictate your ballad to you, word for word," which was done accordingly.

As this was among the first times that I ever travelled for a few days in company with Scott, I may as well add the surprise with which his literary diligence, when away from home and his books, could not fail to be observed. Wherever we slept, whether in a noble mansion or in the shabbiest of country inns, and whether the work was done after retiring at night or before an early start in the morning, he *very rarely* mounted the carriage again without having a packet of the well-known aspect ready sealed, and corded, and addressed to his printer in Edinburgh. I used to suspect that he had adopted in his latter years the plan of writing everything on paper of the quarto form, in place of the folio which he at an earlier period used, chiefly because in this way, whatever he was writing, and wherever he wrote, he might seem to casual observers to be

* Miscellaneous Prose Works, vol. XXI pp 77—151

merely engaged upon a common letter, and the rapidity of his execution, taken with the shape of his sheet, has probably deceived hundreds, but when he had finished his two or three letters, St Ronan's Well, or whatever was in hand, had made a chapter in advance.

St. Ronan's Well was published about the middle of December, and in its English reception there was another falling off, which of course somewhat dispirited the bookseller for the moment. Scotch readers in general dissented stontly from this judgment, alleging (as they might well do) that Meg Dods deserved a place by the side of Monkbarons, Bailie Jarvie, and Captain Dalgetty, that no one, who had lived in the author's own country, could hesitate to recognize vivid and happy portraitures in Touchwood, MacTurk, and the recluse minister of St. Ronan's, that the descriptions of natural scenery might rank with any he had given, and, finally, that the whole character of Clara Mowbray, but especially its development in the third volume, formed an original creation, destined to be classed by posterity with the highest efforts of tragic romance. Some Edinburgh critics, however (both talkers and writers), received with considerable grudgings certain sarcastic sketches of the would-be-life of the watering-place, sketches which their Southron brethren had kindly suggested *might* be drawn from *Northern* observation, but could never appear better than fantastic caricatures to any person who had visited even a third-rate English resort of the same nominal class. There is no doubt that the author dashed off these minor personages with, in the painter's phrase, *a rich brush*, but I must confess my belief that they have far more truth about them than his countrymen seemed at the time willing to allow, and if any of my readers, whether Scotch or English, has ever happened to spend a few months, not in either an English or a Scotch watering-place of the present day, but among such miscellaneous assemblages of British nondescripts and outcasts (including often persons of higher birth than any of the *beau monde* of St. Ronan's Well) as now infest many towns of France and Switzerland, he will, I am satisfied, be inclined to admit that while the Continent was shut, as it was in the days of Sir Walter's youthful wanderings, a trip to such a sequestered place as Gilsland, or Moffat, or Innerleithen (almost as inaccessible to London duns and bailiffs as the Isle of Man was then, or as Boulogne and Dieppe are now), may have supplied the future novelist's note-book with authentic materials even for such worthies as Sir Bingo and Lady Binks, Dr Quackleben, and Mr Winterblossom. It should, moreover, be borne in mind that during our insular blockade, northern watering-places were not alone favoured by the resort of questionable characters from the south. The comparative cheapness of living, and especially of education, procured for Sir Walter's "own romantic town" a constant succession of such visitants, so long as they could have no access to the *tables d'hôte* and dancing-masters of the Continent. When I first mingled in the society of Edinburgh it abounded with English, broken in character and in fortune, who found a mere title (even a baronet's one) of consequence enough to obtain for them, from the proverbially cautious Scotch, a degree of attention to which they had long been unaccustomed among those who had chanced to observe the progress of their personal histories, and I heard in my name, when the novel was new, a booby of some

rank, in whom they recognized a sufficiently accurate prototype for Sir Bingo.

Sir Walter had shown a remarkable degree of good-nature in the completion of this novel. When the end came in view James Ballantyne suddenly took vast alarm about a particular feature in the history of the heroine. In the original conception, and in the book as actually written and printed, Miss Mowbray's mock marriage had not halted at the profaned ceremony of the church, and the delicate printer shrank from the idea of obtruding on the fastidious public the possibility of any personal contamination having been incurred by a high-born damsel of the nineteenth century. Scott was at first inclined to dismiss his friend's scruples as briefly as he had done those of Blackwood in the case of the Black Dwarf—"You would never have quarrelled with it," he said, "had the thing happened to a girl in gingham. The silk petticoat can make little difference." James reclaimed with double energy, and called Constable to the rescue, and after some pause, the author very reluctantly consented to cancel and re-write about twenty-four pages, which was enough to obliterate to a certain extent the dreaded scandal—and in a similar degree, as he always persisted, to perplex and weaken the course of his narrative, and the dark effect of its catastrophe.

Whoever might take offence with different parts of the book, it was rapturously hailed by the inhabitants of Innerleithen, who immediately identified the most striking of its localities with those of their own pretty village and its picturesque neighbourhood, and foresaw in this celebration a chance of restoring the popularity of their long neglected *Well*—the same to which, as the reader may have noticed, Sir Walter Scott had occasionally escorted his mother and sister in the days of boyhood. The notables of the little town voted by acclamation that the old name of Innerleithen should be, as far as possible, dropped thenceforth, and that of St. Ronan's adopted. Nor were they mistaken in their auguries. An unheard-of influx of water-bibbers forthwith crowned their hopes, and spruce *hotties* and huge staring lodging-houses soon arose to disturb woefully every association that had induced Sir Walter to make Innerleithen the scene of a romance. Nor were they who profited by these invasions of the *genus loci* at all sparing in their demonstrations of gratitude. The traveller reads on the corner of every new erection there, "Abbotsford Place," "Waverley Row," "The Marmion Hotel," or some inscription of the like coinage.

Among other consequences of the revived fame of the place, a yearly festival was instituted for the celebration of "The St. Ronan's Border Games." A club of "Bowmen of the Border," arrayed in doublets of Lincoln green, with broad blue bonnets, and having the Ettrick Shepherd for Captain, assumed the principal management of this exhibition; and Sir Walter was well pleased to be enrolled among them, and during several years was a regular attendant, both on the Meadow, where (besides archery) leaping, racing, wrestling, stone-heaving, and hammer-throwing went on opposite to the noble old Castle of Traquair, and at the subsequent banquet, where Hogg, in full costume, always presided as master of the ceremonies. In fact, a gayer spectacle than that of the *St. Ronan's Games*, in those days, could not well have been desired. The

Shepherd, even when on the verge of threescore, exerted himself lustily in the field, and seldom failed to carry off some of the prizes, to the astonishment of his vanquished juniors, and the *bon-vivants* of Edinburgh mustered strong among the gentry and yeomanry of Tweeddale to see him afterwards in his glory, filling the president's chair with eminent success, and commonly supported on this—which was, in fact, the grandest evening of his year—by Sir Walter Scott, Professor Wilson, Sir Adam Ferguson, and “Peter Robertson.”

Immediately on the conclusion of St Ronan's Well, Sir Walter began the novel of Redgauntlet, but it had made considerable progress at press before Constable and Ballantyne could persuade him to substitute that title for *Herries*. The book was published in June, 1824, and was received at the time somewhat coldly, though it has since, I believe, found more justice. The re-introduction of the adventurous hero of 1745, in the dulness and dimness of advancing age, and fortunes hopelessly blighted, and the presenting him—with whose romantic portraiture at an earlier period historical truth had been so admirably blended—as the moving principle of events not only entirely but notoriously imaginary—this was a rash experiment, and could not fail to suggest many disagreeable and disadvantageous comparisons, yet, had there been no *Waverley*, I am persuaded the fallen and faded Ascanius of Redgauntlet would have been universally pronounced a masterpiece. About the secondary personages there could be little ground for controversy. What novel or drama has surpassed the grotesquely ludicrous, dashed with the profound pathos, of Peter Peebles, the most tragic of farces?—or the still sadder merriment of that human shipwreck, Nantie Ewart?—or *Wandering Willie* and his Tale?—the wildest and most rueful of dreams told by such a person, and in such a dialect! Of the young correspondents Darsie Latimer and Allan Fairford, and the Quakers of Mount Sharon, and indeed of numberless minor features in Redgauntlet, no one who has read these memoirs will expect me to speak at length here. With posterity assuredly this novel will yield in interest to none of the series, for it contains perhaps more of the author's personal experiences than any other of them, or even than all the rest put together.

This year, *mirabile dictu!* produced but one novel, and it is not impossible that the author had taken deeply into his mind, though he would not immediately act upon them, certain hints about the danger of “overcropping,” which have been alluded to as dropping from his publishers in 1823. He had, however, a labour of some weight to go through in preparing for the press a second edition of his voluminous *Swift*. The additions to this reprint were numerous, and he corrected his notes, and the *Life of the Dean* throughout, with considerable care. He also threw off several reviews and other petty miscellanies, among which last occurs his memorable tribute to the memory of Lord Byron, written for Ballantyne's newspaper immediately after the news of the catastrophe at Missolonghi reached Abbotsford.

The arrangement of his library and museum was, however, the main care of the summer months of this year, and his woods were now in such a state of progress that his most usual exercise out of doors was thinning them. He was an expert as well as powerful wielder of the

axe, and competed with his ablest subalterns as to the paucity of blows by which a tree could be brought down. The wood rang ever and anon with laughter while he shared their labours, and if he had taken, as he every now and then did, a whole day with them, they were sure to be invited home to Abbotsford to sup gaily at Tom Purdie's. One of Sir Walter's Transatlantic admirers, by the way, sent him a complete assortment of the tools employed in clearing the backwoods, and both he and Tom made strenuous efforts to attain some dexterity in using them, but neither succeeded. The American axe in particular, having a longer shaft than ours, and a much smaller and narrower cutting-piece, was, in Tom's opinion, only fit for paring a *lebbuck* (i.e., a cheese of skimmed milk). The old-fashioned large and broad axe was soon resumed, and the belt that bore it had accommodation also for a chisel, a hammer, and a small saw. Among all the numberless portraits, why was there not one representing the "Belted Knight," accoutred with these appurtenances of his forest craft, jogging over the leather on a breezy morning, with Thomas Purdie at his stirrup, and Maida stalking in advance?

Notwithstanding numberless letters to Terry about his upholstery, the far greater part of it was manufactured at home. The most of the articles from London were only models for the use of two or three neat-handed carpenters whom he had discovered in the villages near him, and he watched and directed their operations as carefully as a George Bullock could have done, and the results were such as even Bullock might have admired. The great table in the library, for example (a most complex and beautiful one), was done entirely in the room where it now stands, by Joseph Shillinglaw of Darnick—the Sheriff planning and studying every turn as zealously as ever an old lady pondered the development of an embroidered cushion. The hangings and curtains, too, were chiefly the work of a little hunchbacked tailor, by name William Goodfellow, save at Abbotsford, where he answered to *Robin*, who occupied a cottage on Scott's farm of the Broomieles, one of the race that creep from homestead to homestead, welcomed wherever they appear by housewife and handmaiden, the great gossips and news-men of the parish—in Scottish nomenclature *cardboers*. Proudly and earnestly did all these vassals toil in his service; and I think it was one of them that, when some stranger asked a question about his personal demeanour, answered in these simple words, "Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood relations." Not long after he had completed his work at Abbotsford, little Goodfellow fell sick, and as his cabin was near Chiefswood, I had many opportunities of observing the Sheriff's kind attention to him in his affliction. I can never forget, in particular, the evening on which the poor tailor died. When Scott entered the hovel he found every thing silent, and inferred from the looks of the good women in attendance that their patient had fallen asleep, and that they feared his sleep was the final one. He murmured some syllables of kind regret,—at the sound of his voice the dying tailor unclosed his eyes, and eagerly and wistfully sat up, clasping his hands with an expression of rapturous gratefulness and devotion, that, in the midst of deformity, disease, pain, and wretchedness, was at once beautiful and sublime. He cried with a loud voice, "The Lord bless and reward you," and expired with the effort.

In the painting of his interior, too, Sir Walter personally directed everything. He abominated the commonplace daubing of walls, panels, doors, and window-boards with coats of white, blue, or grey, and thought that sparklings and edgings of gilding only made their baldness and poverty more noticeable. He desired to have about him, wherever he could manage it, rich, though not gaudy, hangings, or substantial, old-fashioned wainscot-work, with no ornament but that of carving; and where the wood was to be painted at all, it was done in strict imitation of oak or cedar. Except in the drawing-room, which he abandoned to Lady Scott's taste, all the roofs were in appearance of antique carved oak, relieved by coats of arms duly blazoned at the intersections of beams, and resting on cornices, to the eye of the same material, but really composed of casts in plaster of Paris after the foliage, the flowers, the grotesque monsters and dwarfs, and sometimes the beautiful heads of nuns and confessors, on which he had doted from infancy among the cloisters of Melrose and Roslin. In the painting of these things, also, he had instruments who considered it as a labour of love. The master-limner, in particular, had a devoted attachment to his person, and this was not wonderful, for he, in fact, owed a prosperous fortune to Scott's kind and sagacious counsel, tendered at the very outset of his career. A printer's apprentice attracted notice by his attempts with the pencil, and Sir Walter was called upon, after often admiring his skill in representing dogs and horses and the like, to assist him with his advice, as ambition had been stirred, and the youth would fain give himself to the regular training of an artist. Scott took him into his room, and conversed with him at some length. He explained the difficulties and perils, the almost certain distresses, the few and narrow chances of this aspiring walk. He described the hundreds of ardent spirits that pine out their lives in solitary garrets, lamenting over the rash eagerness with which they had obeyed the suggestions of young ambition, and chosen a career in which success of any sort is rare, and no success but the highest is worth attaining. "You have talents and energy," said he, "but who can say whether you have genius? These bovish drawings can never be relied on as proofs of *that*. If you feel within you such a glow of ambition, that you would rather run a hundred chances of obscurity and penury than miss *one* of being a Wilkie, make up your mind, and take the bold plunge, but if your object is merely to raise yourself to a station of worldly comfort and independence—if you would fain look forward with tolerable assurance to the prospect of being a respectable citizen, with your own snug roof over your head, and the happy faces of a wife and children about you—pause and reflect well. It appears to me that there is little demand for fine works of the pencil in this country. Not a few artists, who have even obtained high and merited reputation, find employment scarce, and starve under their laurels. I think profit in Britain is, with very rare exceptions, annexed to departments of obvious and direct utility, in which the mass of the people are concerned, and it has often struck me, that some clever fellow might make a good hit if, in place of enrolling himself among the future Raphaels and Vandykes of the Royal Academy, he should resolutely set himself to introducing something of a more elegant style of house-painting." The young man

thus addressed (Mr D R. Hay) was modest and wise enough to accept the advice with thankfulness, and to act upon it with patience and steadiness. After a few years he had qualified himself to take charge of all this delicate limning and blazoning at Abbotsford. He is now, I understand, at the head of a great and flourishing establishment in Edinburgh; and a treatise on the science of colour, which has proceeded from his pen, is talked of as reflecting high credit on his taste and understanding. Nor should I omit what seems a particularly honourable trait in Mr Hay—he is said to be one of the most liberal patrons of native art now in existence, in fact, to possess an unrivalled collection of the works of contemporary Scottish painters.

Meantime the progress of Abbotsford stimulated largely both friends and strangers to contribute articles of enmity towards its final adornment. I have already alluded with regret to the non-completion of the poet's own catalogue of his literary and antiquarian rarities, begun under the title of *Reliquiæ Trotcosianæ*, and mentioned Mr Train, the affectionate supervisor of excise, as the most unwearied and bountiful of all the contributors to the museum. Now, he would fain have his part in the substantial *plenishing* also, and I transcribe, as a specimen of his zeal, the account which I have received from himself of the preparation and transmission of one piece of furniture, to which his friend allotted a distinguished place, for it was one of the two chairs that ultimately stood in his own *sanctum sanctorum*. In those days Mr Train's official residence was at Kirkintilloch, in Stirlingshire, and he says, in his *Memoranda*—

"Rarbiston, or, as it is now called, Robroyston, where the valiant Wallace was betrayed by Monteith of Ruskie, is only a few miles distant from Kirkintilloch. The walls of the house where the first scene of that disgraceful tragedy was acted were standing, on my arrival in that quarter. The roof was entirely gone, but I observed that some bits of the rafters, built into the wall, were still remaining. As the ruin was about being taken down to make way for the ploughshare, I easily succeeded in purchasing these old stumps from the farmer upon whose ground it stood. When taken out of the building, these pieces of wood were seemingly so much decayed as to be fit only for fuel, but after planing off about an inch from the surface, I found that the remainder of the wood was as hard as a bone, and susceptible of a fine polish. I then resolved upon having a chair of the most antique description made out of these wasted blocks as a memorial of our most patriotic hero, with a feeling somewhat similar to theirs who remember their Saviour in the crucifix.

"In the execution of this undertaking workmen of various denominations were employed. It was modelled from an old chair in the palace of Hamilton, and is nearly covered with carved work, representing rocks, heather, and thistles, emblematic of Scotland, and indented with brass, representing the *Harp of the North*, surrounded with laurels, and supported by targets, claymores, Lochaber axes, war-horns, &c. The seat is covered with silk velvet, beneath which is a drawer, containing a book bound in the most primitive form in Robroyston Wood, with large clasps. In this book are detailed at length some of the particulars here briefly alluded to, with the affirmations of several persons to whose care the chair was entrusted in the course of making.

"On the (inside) back of the chair is a brass plate, bearing the following inscription.—

"THIS CHAIR,
MADE OF THE ONLY REMAINING WOOD
OF THE
HOUSE OF ROBROYSTON,
IN WHICH THE
MATCHLESS SIR WILLIAM WALLACE
'WAS DONE TO DEATH BY FFLON HAND
FOR GUARDING WELL HIS FATHERS' LAND,'
IS MOST RESPECTFULLY PRESENTED TO
SIR WALTER SCOTT,
AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE,
BY HIS DEVOTED SERVANT,
JOSEPH TRAIN

"Exaggerated reports of this chair spread over the adjacent country with a fiery-cross-like speed, and raised public curiosity to such a height that persons in their own carriages came many miles to see it. I happened to be in a distant part of my district at the time, but I daresay many persons in Kirkintilloch yet remember how triumphantly the symbolic chair was borne from my lodgings to the bank of the Great Canal, to be there shipped for Abbotsford, in the midst of the town band playing, 'Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' and surrounded by thousands who made the welkin resound with bursts of national enthusiasm, justifying the couplet of Pope—

"All this may be, the people's voice is odd,
The Scots will fight for Wallace as for God."

Such arrivals as that of "the Wallace Chair" were frequent throughout 1824. It was a happy, and therefore it need hardly be added an uneventful year—his last year of undisturbed prosperity. The little incidents that diversified his domestic interior, and the zeal which he always kept up for the concerns of his friends, together with a few indications of his opinions on subjects of literature and political interest, found in his correspondence, will hardly require any editorial explanations.

Within, I think, the same week in January, arrived a copy of Montfaucon's *Antiquities*, in fifteen volumes folio, richly bound in scarlet, the gift of King George IV, and a set of the *Variarum Classics*, in about a hundred volumes octavo, from Mr Constable.

In October of this year, Sir Walter's son Charles began his residence at Brazenose College, Oxford. The adoption of this plan implied finally dropping the appointment in the civil service of the East India Company, which had been placed at his disposal by Lord Bathurst in the spring of 1820, a step, I need not observe, which, were there any doubt on that subject, would alone be sufficient to prove, to the conviction of the most envious sceptic, that the young gentleman's father at this time considered his own worldly fortunes as in a highly prosperous situation. A writer-ship in India is early independence,—in the case of a son of Scott, so conducting himself as not to discredit the name he inherited, it could hardly have failed to be early wealth. And Sir Walter was the last

man to deprive his boy of such safe and easy prospects of worldly advantage, turning him over to the precarious chances of a learned profession in Great Britain, unless in the confidence that his own resources were so great as to render ultimate failure in such a career a matter of no primary importance

During the Winter Session of his Court, Sir Walter resumed his usual course of literary exertion, which the supervision of carpenters, painters, and upholsterers had so long interrupted. The Tales of the Crusaders were begun, but I defer, for the present, the history of their progress.

Abbotsford was at last finished, and in all its splendour, and at Christmas, a larger party than the house could ever before have accommodated were assembled there. Among the guests was one who kept a copious journal during his stay, and has kindly furnished me with a copy of it. I shall, therefore, extract such passages as bear immediately upon Sir Walter Scott himself, who certainly was never subjected to sharper observation than that of his ingenious friend Captain Basil Hall.

EXTRACTS FROM CAPTAIN HALL'S JOURNAL

“Abbotsford, December 29, 1824

“This morning my brother James and I set out from Edinburgh in the Blucher coach, at eight o'clock, and although we heard of snow-storms on the hills, we bowled along without the smallest impediment, and with a fine bright sun and cheerful green fields around us, with only here and there a distant streak of snow in some shady ravine. We arrived in good time, and found several other guests at dinner. * * * *

“The public rooms are lighted with oil-gas in a style of extraordinary splendour. The passages also and the bed-rooms are lighted in a similar manner. The whole establishment is on the same footing, I mean the attendance and entertainment, all is in good order, and an air of punctuality and method, without any waste or ostentation, pervades every thing. Every one seems at his ease, and although I have been in some big houses in my time, and amongst good folks who studied these sort of points not a little, I don't remember to have anywhere met with things better managed in all respects. * * * *

“Scott is loyal to the back-bone, to use a vulgar phrase, but with all this there is nothing servile or merely personal in his loyalty. When the King was coming to Edinburgh, and it was known he was to pass over Waterloo Bridge, a gentleman suggested to him the fitness of concealing or erasing the inscription respecting Prince Leopold* on the arch of the bridge, as it was known there was a coolness between the King and his son-in-law. ‘What!’ said he, ‘shall we insult the King's son-in-law, and through him the King himself, by any allusion to, or notice of, what is so unworthy of all parties? Shall we be ashamed of our own act, and without any diminution of our respect for those to whom the compliment was paid, draw back and eat our words because we have heard of a petty misunderstanding? Shall we undo that which our respect for the King and his family alone prompted us, right or wrong, to do? No, sir! sooner

* Prince Leopold had been present at the opening of this bridge and the inscription records that circumstance

than that inscription should be erased, or even covered with flags or flowers, as you propose, or that anything, in short, should be done to show that we were ashamed of our respect for Prince Leopold, or sought to save the King's feelings by a sacrifice of our own dignity, I would with my own hand set the town of Edinburgh on fire, and destroy it!" * *

"In the evening we had a great feast indeed Sir Walter asked us if we had ever read *Christabel*, and upon some of us admitting with shame that we had never even seen it, he offered to read it, and took a chair in the midst of all the party in the library. He read the poem from end to end with a wonderful pathos and variety of expression, in some parts his voice was deep and sonorous, at others loud and animated, but almost carefully appropriate, and very sweetly modulated. In his hands, at all events, *Christabel* justified Lord Byron's often-quizzed character of it—"a wild and singularly original and beautiful poem."

"Sir Walter also read us, with the utmost delight, or, as it is called, completely *con amore*, the famous poem on Thomas the Rhymer's adventure with the Queen of the Fairies, but I am at a loss to say which was the most interesting, or even I will say poetical, his conversational account of it to us to-day on the very spot, Huntly Burn, or the highly characteristic ballad which he read to us in the evening.

"Interspersed with these various readings were hundreds of stories, some quaint, some pathological—some wild and fairylike, and not a few warlike, especially of the old times, and now and then one of Wellington and Waterloo, and sometimes he gave anecdotes of things close to his own doors,—ay, and incidents of this very day, which we had passed unseen, but which were now kindled into interest and importance, as if by the touch of a magician's wand.

"There was also much pleasing singing many old ballads, and many pretending to be old ballads, were sung to the harp and pianoforte. The following is so exquisitely pathetic, that I copied it, after I went to my room, from the young ladies' book, and give it a place, though perhaps it is to be found somewhere in print —

"My love he built me a bonnie bower," &c, &c.

"Abbotsford, January 2, 1825

"At breakfast to-day we had, as usual, some 150 stories—God knows how they came in, but he is, in the matter of anecdote, what *Hudibras* was in figures of speech—"his mouth he could not ope, but out there flew a trope"—so with the Great Unknown, his mouth he cannot open without giving out something worth hearing, and all so simply, good-naturedly, and naturally. I quite forget all these stories but one—"My cousin Watty Scott," said he, "was a midshipman some forty years ago in a ship at Portsmouth, he and two other companions had gone on shore, and had overstaid their leave, spent all their money, and run up an immense bill at a tavern on the Point, the ship made the signal for sailing, but their landlady said, "No, gentlemen, you shall not escape without paying your reckoning," and she accompanied her words by appropriate actions, and placed them under the tender keeping of a sufficient party of bailiffs. They felt that they were in a scrape, and petitioned very hard to be released. "No, no," said Mrs Quickly "I must be satisfied one way or

tother: you must be well aware, gentlemen, that you will be totally ruined if you don't get on board in time" They made long faces, and confessed that it was but too true "Well," said she, "I'll give you one chance I am so circumstanced here that I cannot carry on my business as a single woman, and I must contrive somehow to have a husband, or at all events I must be able to produce a marriage certificate; and therefore the only terms on which you shall all three have leave to go on board to-morrow morning is that one of you consent to marry me I don't care which it is, but, by all that's holy, one of you I will have, or else you all three go to jail, and your ship sails without you!" The virago was not to be pacified, and the poor youths, left to themselves, agreed after a time to draw lots, and it happened to fall on my cousin No time was lost, and off they marched to church, and my poor relative was forthwith spliced The bride on returning gave them a good substantial dinner, and several bottles of wine apiece, and having tumbled them into a wherry, sent them off The ship sailed, and the young men religiously adhered to the oath of secrecy they had taken previous to drawing lots The bride, I should have said, merely wanted to be married, and was the first to propose an eternal separation Some months after, at Jamaica, a file of papers reached the midshipmen's berth, and Watty, who was observed to be looking over them carelessly, reading an account of a robbery and murder at Portsmouth, suddenly jumped up, in his ecstasy forgot his obligation of secrecy, and cried out, "Thanks be to God, my wife is hanged!"

"Mixed up with all this fun Sir Walter has much admirable good sense, and makes many valuable reflections, which are apt sometimes to escape notice from the unpretending manner in which they are introduced Talking of different professions to-day, and of the universal complaint of each one being overstocked, he observed, 'Ay, ay, it is the same in all, we wear our teeth out in the hard drudgery of the outset, and at length, when we do get bread to eat, we complain that the crust is hard, so that in neither case are we satisfied'

"Taking up a book with a pompous dedication to the King, he read the first paragraph, in which the style was inverted in such a manner as scarcely to be intelligible, but yet was so oddly turned as to excite curiosity 'Now this,' he said, 'is just like a man coming into a room bottom foremost in order to excite attention he ought to be kicked for his pains'

"Speaking of books and booksellers, he remarked that, considered generally, an author might be satisfied if he got one-sixth part of the retail price of his book for his share of the profits, this seems very moderate, but who should have such means of making a right calculation on such a point?

"Some conversation arose about stranger tourists, and I learned that Sir Walter had at length been very reluctantly obliged to put a stop to the inundation of these people by sending an intimation to the inns at Melrose and Selkirk to stop them by a message, saying it was not convenient to receive company at Abbotsford unless their visit had been previously announced and accepted Before this the house used to be literally stormed, no less than sixteen parties, all uninvited, came in one day, and frequently eight or ten forced themselves in. So that it became impos-

sible for the family to have a moment to themselves. The tourists roved about the house, touched and displaced the armour, and I dare say (though this was not admitted) many and many a set carried off some trophy with them.

"Just as breakfast was concluded to-day he said, 'Ladies and gentlemen, I shall read prayers at eleven, when I expect you all to attend.' He did not treat the subject as if ashamed of it, which some do. He did not say 'those who please may come, and any one who likes may stay away,' as I have often heard. He read the Church of England service, and did it with singular beauty and impressiveness, varying his voice according to the subject, and as the first lesson was from a very poetical part of Isaiah, he kindled up, and read it with a great deal of animation, without, however, overstepping the solemnity of the occasion. * * * *

"*January 9, 1825*—To-day my sister Fanny and I came here. In the evening there was a dance in honour of Sir Walter Scott's eldest son, who had recently come from Sandhurst College, after having passed through some military examinations with great credit.

"We had a great clan of Scotts. There was no less than nine Scotts of Harden, and ten of other families. There were others beside from the neighbourhood—at least half a dozen Fergusons, with the jolly Sir Adam at their head, Lady Ferguson, her niece, Miss Jobson, the pretty heiress of Lochore, &c, &c., &c. * * * *

"The evening passed very merrily, with much spirited dancing, and the supper was extremely cheerful, and quite superior to that of Hogmanay.

"It is wonderful how many people a house can be made to hold upon occasions such as this, and when, in the course of the morning, the neighbours came to stream off to their respective homes, one stared, like the man in the Arabian Nights who uncorked the genie, thinking how the dence they ever got in. There were a few who stayed a while to saunter about the dressed grounds, under the guidance of Sir Walter, but by one or two o'clock my sister and I found ourselves the only guests left, and on the Great Unknown proposing a walk to a point in his plantations called Turn-again, we gladly accepted his offer and set out.

"I have never seen him in better spirits, and we accompanied him for several hours with great delight. I observed that on this occasion the tone of his innumerable anecdotes was somewhat different from what it had been when James and I and some other gentlemen formed his companions. There was then an occasional roughness in the point and matter of the stories, but no trace of this to-day. He was no less humorous, however, and varied than before, always appropriate, too—in harmony with the occasion, as it were—never lugging in stories by the head and shoulders. It is very difficult, I may say impossible, to give a correct conception of this by mere description. So much consists in the manner and the actual tone and wording of what is said, so much also which cannot be imparted in the surrounding circumstances—the state of the weather, the look of the country, the sound of the wind in the trees close at hand, the view of the distant hills—all these and a thousand other things, produce an effect on the minds of those present which suits them for the reception of the conversation at the moment, and

prevents any transfer of the sentiments produced thereby to any one differently circumstanced

"On reaching the brow of the hill on the eastern side of one of his plantations, we came in sight of Melrose Abbey, on which there was a partial gleam of sunshine lighting up an angle of the ruins. Straightway we had an anecdote of Tom Purdie, his gamekeeper and factotum. Tom has been many years with Sir Walter, and being constantly in such company, has insensibly picked up some of the taste and feeling of a higher order. 'When I came here first,' said Tom to the factor's wife, 'I was little better than a beast, and knew nae mair than a cow what was pretty and what was ugly. I was cunf enough to think that the bonniest thing in a countryside was a corn-field enclosed in four stane dykes, but now I ken the difference. Look this way, Mrs Laidlaw, and I'll show you what the gentlefolks likes. See ye there now the sun glinting on Melrose Abbey? It's now aw bright, nor it's na aw shadows neither, but just a bit screed o' light here, and a bit daud o' dark yonder like, and that's what they ca' picturesque, and, indeed, it maun be confessed it is unco bonnie to look at!'

"Sir Walter wished to have a road made through a straicht belt of trees which had been planted before he purchased the property, but being obliged to return to Edinburgh, he entrusted it to Tom Purdie, his 'right-hand man'. 'Tom,' said he, 'you must not make this walk straight, neither must it be crooked.' 'Deil, sir! then what maun it be like?' 'Why,' said his master, 'don't you remember when you were a shepherd, Tom, the way in which you dandered hame of an even? You never walked straight to your house, nor did you go much about. Now make me just such a walk as you used to take yourself.' Accordingly Tom's walk is a standing proof of the skill and taste of the *ex-devant* shepherd, as well as of the happy power which his master possesses, in trifles as well as in great affairs, of imparting his ideas to those he wishes to influence * * *

"In the course of our walk he entertained us much by an account of the origin of the beautiful song of 'Auld Robin Gray'. 'It was written,' he said, 'by Lady Anne Landsay, now Lady Anne Bernard. She happened to be at a house where she met Miss Suff Johnstone, a well-known person, who played the air, and accompanied it by words of no great delicacy, whatever their antiquity might be, and Lady Anne lamenting that no better words should belong to such a melody, immediately set to work and composed this very pathetic story. Truth, I am sorry to say, obliges me to add that it was a fiction. Robin Gray was her father's gardener, and the idea of the young lover going to sea, which would have been quite out of character here amongst the shepherds, was natural enough where she was then residing, on the coast of Fife. It was long unknown,' he added, 'who the author was, and, indeed, there was a clergyman on the coast whose conscience was so large that he took the burden of this matter upon himself, and pleaded guilty to the authorship. About two years ago I wrote to Lady Anne to know the truth, and she wrote back to say she was certainly the author, but wondered how I could have guessed it, as there was no person alive to whom she had told it. When I mentioned having heard it long ago from a common

friend who was dead, she then recollected me, and wrote one of the kindest letters I ever received, saying she had till now not the smallest idea that I was the little *lame boy* she had known so many years before.

"I give this anecdote partly from its own interest, and partly for the sake of introducing the unconcerned allusion to his own lameness—which I have heard him mention repeatedly, in the same sort of way, without seemingly caring about it. Once speaking of the old city wall of Edinburgh (which, by the way, he says was built during the panic caused by the disastrous battle of Flodden Field), he said it used to be a great *ploy* in his youth to climb the said wall. 'I used often to do it,' he observed, 'notwithstanding my bad foot, which made it no very easy job.'

"On coming to a broad path in the middle of the woods, we took notice of a finger-post, on which was written '*The Road to Selkirk*.' We made some remark about Tom's orthography, upon which he laughed, and said that that finger-post had gained him great popularity in the neighbourhood. 'I cannot say,' he remarked, 'that I had any such view when I ordered it to be put up. The public road, it is true, is not far off, and this leads through the very centre of my grounds, but I never could bring myself to make that a reason for excluding any person who finds it agreeable or advantageous to take over the hill if he likes. But although my practice in this respect had always been well known, the actual admission of it, the avowed establishment of it as a sort of right, by sticking up the finger-post, was received as a kind of boon, and I got a world of credit for a thing which had certainly not any popularity for its object. Nevertheless,' he continued, 'I have no scruple in saying that what I did deserved the good people's acknowledgment, and I seriously disapprove of those proprietors who act on a different principle in these matters. Nothing on earth would induce me to put up boards threatening prosecution, or cautioning one's fellow-creatures to beware of man-traps and spring-guns. I hold that all such things are not only in the highest degree offensive and hurtful to the feelings of people whom it is every way important to conciliate, but that they are also quite inefficient, and I will venture to say that not one of my young trees has ever been cut, nor a fence trodden down, or any kind of damage done in consequence of the free access which all the world has to my place. Round the house, of course, there is a set of walks set apart and kept private for the ladies, but over all the rest of my land any one may rove as he likes. I please myself with the reflection that many people of taste may be indulging their fancies in these grounds, and I often recollect how much of Burns' inspiration was probably due to his having near him the woods of Ballochmyle to ramble through at his will when he was a rugged callant.'

"He told us of the different periods at which he had planted his grounds. 'I bought this property bit by bit,' he said, 'as accident threw the means of purchase into my hands, I could not lay it all out in a consistent plan, for when I first came here I merely bought a few acres and built a cottage as a kind of occasional retreat from the bustle of Edinburgh. By degrees I got another and another farm, till all you now see came to me. If things go on improving at the rate they do in the matter of travelling, I dare say I shall be able to live here all the year

round, and come out every day from the Court. At present I pass about seven months of the year at Abbotsford; but if the projected railway is established, and we have steam coaches upon it running at twenty miles an hour, it will be merely good exercise to go in to breakfast and come back to dinner.

"In a hilly country such as this one is more dependent upon the taste of one's neighbours than where the surface is flat, for the inequalities bring into view many distant points which one must constantly be wishing to see turned to advantage. Thus it is of consequence to be on such friendly terms with the neighbourhood, especially the proprietors on the opposite side of the river, that they may take one's comfort and pleasure into consideration when they come to plant or otherwise to embellish their ground. Sir Walter pointed out several different plantations which had been made expressly with a view to the improvement of the prospect from Abbotsford. The owner of one of these estates came over to him one day to point out the line which he had traced with a plough as the limit of a new plantation, and asked Sir Walter how he liked it, or if he wished any alteration to be made. The author of Waverley thanked him for his attention, and the two gentlemen climbed the hill above Abbotsford to take the matter into consideration. It was soon seen that without extending the projected plantation, or diminishing its beauty with reference to the estate on which it was made, a new line might be drawn which would double its apparent magnitude, and greatly enhance the beauty of its form, as seen from Abbotsford. The gentleman was delighted to have an opportunity of obliging the Great well-known Unknown, and cantered back to change the line. The young trees are already giving sufficient evidence of the good taste of the proposer of the change, and, it may be said also, of his good sense and his good-nature, for unless he possessed both in an eminent degree, all his gigantic talents would be insufficient to bring round about him the ready hearts and hands of all within his reach. Scott of Gala, for instance, has, out of pure kindness, planted for a space of several miles the whole of the opposite bank of the Tweed, and with great pains improved all the lines of his father's planting, solely to please his neighbour, and without any benefit to his own place. His worthy friend also of Eildon Hall, he told us to-day, had kindly undertaken in the same spirit to plant the base of these two beautiful hills, which, without diminishing their grandeur, will greatly add to their picturesque effect, and, in fact, increase the bold magnificence of their summits.

"I make not a rule to be on intimate terms," he told us, "with all my neighbours that would be an idle thing to do. Some are good, some not so good, and it would be foolish and ineffectual to treat all with the same cordiality, but to live in harmony with all is quite easy, and surely very pleasant. Some of them may be rough and *gruff* at first, but all men, kindly used, come about at last, and by going on gently, and never being eager or noisy about what I want, and letting things glide on leisurely, I always find in the end that the object is gained on which I have set my heart, either by exchange or purchase, or by some sort of compromise by which both parties are obliged, and good-will begot if it did not exist before—strengthened if it did exist."

"There, see, he continued 'that farm there at the foot of the hill, is occupied by a respectable enough tenant of mine, I told him I had a great desire for him to try the effect of lime on his land. He said he doubted its success, and could not venture to risk so much money as it would cost. "Well," said I, "fair enough, but as I wish to have the experiment tried, you shall have the lime for the mere carting, you may send to the place where it is to be bought, and at the term-day you shall strike off the whole value of the lime from the rent due to me." When the day came my friend the farmer came with his whole rent, which he laid down on the table before me without deduction. "How's this, my man? you are to deduct for the lime you know?" "Why, Sir Walter," replied he, "my conscience will not let me impose on you so far, the lime you recommended me to try, and which but for your suggestion I never would have tried, has produced more than would have purchased the lime half a dozen times over, and I cannot think of making a deduction."

"In this way, by a constant quiet interchange of good offices, he extends his great influence amongst all classes, high and low, and while in the morning, at breakfast-time he gets a letter from the Duke of Wellington, along with some rare Spanish manuscripts taken at Vittoria*; at mid-day he is gossiping with a farmer's wife, or pruning his young trees cheek by jowl with Tam Purdie, at dinner he is keeping the table merry over his admirable good cheer, with ten hundred good stories, or discussing railroads, black-faced sheep, and other improvements with Torwoodlee; in the evening he is setting the young folks to dance, or reading some fine old ballad from Percy's Reliques, or some black-letter tome of Border lore, or giving snatches of beautiful songs, or relating anecdotes of chivalry, and ever and anon coming down to modern home life with some good honest practical remark which sinks irresistibly into the minds of his audience, and all with such ease and unaffected simplicity as never, perhaps, was seen before in any man so gifted, so qualified to take the loftiest, proudest line at the head of the literature, the taste, the imagination of the whole world. Who can doubt that, after such a day as I have glanced at, his slumbers must be peaceful and that remorse is a stranger to his bosom, and that all his renown, all his wealth, and the love of such 'troops of friends, are trebly gratifying to him, and substantial from their being purchased at no cost but that of truth and nature?

"Alas for poor Lord Byron, of whom he told us an anecdote to-day, by which it appeared that his immense fame as an author was altogether insufficient to harden him against the darts of calumny or malevolence levelled at his private life. He quoted, with the bitterest despair, to Scott the strong expression of Shakspeare,

'Our pleasant vices are but whips to scourge us,'†

And added, 'I would to God that I could have your peace of mind, Mr Scott, I would give all I have, all my fame, everything, to be able to speak on this subject' (that of domestic happiness) 'as you do!'

* About this time the Duke sent Scott some curious documents about the proposed duel between Charles V. and Francis I.

† "The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to scourge us."—*King Lear*.

"Sir Walter describes Lord Byron as being a man of real goodness of heart, and the kindest and best feelings, miserably thrown away by his foolish contempt of public opinion. Instead of being warned or checked by public opposition, it roused him to go on in a worse strain, as if he said, 'Ay, you don't like it—well, you shall have something worse for your pains.' Thus his lordship, poor fellow, by taking the wrong view, went on from bad to worse, and at every struggle with the public sunk deeper and deeper in their esteem, while he himself became more and more sensitive about their disapprobation. 'Many, many a pleasant hour I have spent with him,' Sir Walter added, 'and I have never met a man with nobler feelings, or one who, had he not unfortunately taken the wrong course, might have done more to make himself beloved and respected. A man of eminence in any line, and perhaps a man of great literary eminence especially, is exposed to a thousand eyes which men not so celebrated are safe from, and in consequence, right conduct is much more essential to his happiness than to those who are less watched, and I may add, that only by such conduct can the permanence of his real influence over any class be secured. I could not persuade Byron to see it in this light—the more's the pity, for he has had no justice done him.'"

"Some one talked of the pains taken to provide the poor with receipts for making good dishes out of their ordinary messes. 'I dislike all such interference,' he said, 'all your domineering, kind, impertinent visits, they are all pretty much felt like insults, and do no manner of good. Let people go on in their own way, in God's name. How would you like to have a nobleman coming to you to teach you how to dish up your beef-steak into a French kickshaw? And who is there so miserably put to his ways and means that will endure to have another coming to teach him how to economize and keep his accounts? Let the poor alone in their domestic habits, I pray you, protect them and treat them kindly, of course, and trust them, but let them enjoy in quiet their dish of porridge, and their potatoes and herrings, or whatever it may be, but for any sake don't torment them with your fashionable soups. And take care,' he added, 'not to give them anything gratis, except when they are under the gripe of immediate misery—what *they* think misery—consider it as a sin to do anything that can tend to make them lose the precious feelings of independence. For my part, I very, very rarely give anything away. Now, for instance, this pile of branches which has been thinned out this morning, is placed here for sale for the poor people's fires, and I am perfectly certain they are more grateful to me for selling it at the price I do (which, you may be sure, is no great matter), than if I were to give them ten times the quantity for nothing. Every shilling collected in this and other similar manners goes to a fund which pays the doctor for his attendance on them when they are sick, and this is my notion of charity.'"

"I shall have given a false impression of this great man's character to those who do not know him if I have left an impression that he is all goodness and forbearance—that there is no acid in his character, for I have heard him several times as sharp as need be when there was occasion. To-day, for instance, when a recent trial, in which a beautiful actress was concerned, happened to be brought into discussion, he gave

his opinion of all the parties with great force and spirit, and when the lady's father's name was mentioned as having connived at his daughter's disgrace, he exclaimed, 'Well, I do not know what I would not give to have one good kick at that infernal rascal, I would give it to him,' said he, drawing his chair back a foot from the table, 'I would give it to him in such style as should send the vagabond out of that window as far as the Tweed. Only, God forgive me,' added he, smiling at his own unwonted impetuosity, and drawing his chair forward quietly to the table, 'only it would be too good a death for the villain, and besides,' said he, his good-humoured manner returning as he spoke, 'it would be a sad pollution to our bonny Tweed to have the drowning of such a thoroughbred miscreant.'

"It is interesting to see how all ranks agree to respect our hero, and to treat him with respect at once, and with kindness and familiarity. On high days and holidays a large blue ensign, such as is worn by ships of war, is displayed at a flag-staff rising from a round tower built for the purpose at one angle of his garden. The history of this flag is as follows.

"The 'Old Shipping Smack Company' of Leith, some time ago launched one of the finest vessels they had ever sailed, and called her 'The Walter Scott,' in honour of their countryman. In return for this compliment he made the captain a present of a set of flags, which flags you may be sure the noble commander was not shy of displaying to all the world. Now it so happened that there is a strict order forbidding all vessels, except King's ships, to hoist any other flag than a red ensign, so that when our gallant smack-skipper chanced to fall in with one of his Majesty's cruisers, he was ordered peremptorily to pull down his blue colours. This was so sore a humiliation that he refused to obey, and conceiving that he could out-sail the frigate, crowded all sail, and tried to make off with his ensign still flying at his masthead. The ship-of-war, however, was not to be so satisfied, and hunted as much by dropping a cannon-shot across his forefoot. Down came the blue ensign, which was accordingly made prize of, and transmitted forthwith to the Lords of the Admiralty, as is usual in such cases of contumely. Their Lordships, in merry mood, and perhaps even in the plenitude of their power, feeling the respect which was due to genius, sent the flag to Abbotsford, and wrote an official letter to Sir Walter, stating the case, and requesting him to have the goodness to give orders to his cruisers in future not to hoist colours appropriated exclusively to the ships of his Majesty. The transaction was creditable to all parties, and he, instead of taking offence,* as a blockhead in his place would have done, immediately sent for his masons, and built him a tower on which to erect his flag—and the first occasion on which it was displayed was the late return of his eldest son from England. * * *

"I have caught the fever of story-telling from contact with this prince of all story-tellers." During the riots for the immaculate Queen lately deceased, a report went abroad, it seems that Abbotsford had been attacked

* I do not understand how any man could have taken offence under these circumstances. The first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Melville and the Secretary, Mr. Croker were both intimate friends of Sir Walter's, and all that passed was of course matter of course.

by a mob, its windows broken, and the interior ransacked 'Ay, ay,' said one of the neighbouring country people, to whom the story was told, 'so there was a great slaughter of people?' 'Na, na,' said his informant, 'there was naeboddy killed' 'Weel, then,' said the other, 'depend upon it, it's aw a lee—if Abbotsford is taken by storm, and the Shurra in it, ye'll hae afterwards to tak account o' the killed and wounded, I'se warrant ye!'"

"Abbotsford, January 9

"We saw nothing of the chief till luncheon-time, between one and two, and then only for a few minutes. He had gone out to breakfast, and on his return seemed busy with writing. At dinner he was in great force, and pleasant it was to observe the difference which his powers of conversation undergo by the change from a large to a small party. On Friday, when we sat down twenty to dinner, it cost him an effort apparently to keep the ball up at table, but next day, when the company was reduced to his own family, with only two strangers (Fanny and I), he appeared delighted to be at home, and expanded with surprising animation, and poured forth his stores of knowledge and fun on all hands. I have never seen any person on more delightful terms with his family than he is. The best proof of this is the ease and confidence with which they all treat him, amounting quite to familiarity. Even the youngest of his nephews and nieces can joke with him, and seem at all times perfectly at ease in his presence—his coming into the room only increases the laugh, and never checks it; he either joins in what is going on, or passes. No one notices him any more than if he were one of themselves. These are things which cannot be got up—no skill can put people at their ease where the disposition does not sincerely co-operate.

"'Are you a sportsman?' he asked me to-day. I said I was not, that I had begun too late in life, and that I did not find shooting in particular at all amusing. 'Well, neither do I,' he observed, 'time has been when I did shoot a good deal, but somehow I never very much liked it. I was never quite at ease when I had knocked down my blackcock, and going to pick him up he cast back his dying eye with a look of reproach. I don't affect to be more squeamish than my neighbours, but I am not ashamed to say that no practice ever reconciled me fully to the cruelty of the affair. At all events, now that I can do as I like without fear of ridicule, I take more pleasure in seeing the birds fly past me unharmed. I don't carry this nicety, however, beyond my own person, as Walter there will take good occasion to testify to-morrow.'

"Apparently fearing that he had become a little too sentimental, he speedily diverted our thoughts by telling us of a friend of his, Mr Hastings Sands, who went out to shoot for the first time, and after firing away for a whole morning without any success, at length brought down a bird close to the house, and ran up to catch his pheasant, as he supposed, but which, to his horror, he found was a pet parrot belonging to one of the young ladies. It was flipping its painted plumage, now all dripping with blood, and ejaculating quickly, 'Pretty Poll! pretty Poll!' as it expired at the feet of the luckless sportsman, who, between shame and regret, swore that as it was his first experiment in shooting, it should be

his last; and on the spot broke his gun all to pieces, and could never afterwards bear to hear a shot fired

"It becomes a curious question to know when it is that he actually writes these wonderful works which have fixed the attention of the world. Those who live with him, and see him always the idlest man of the company, are at a loss to discover when it is that he finds the means to compose his books. My attention was of course directed this way, and I confess I see no great difficulty about the matter. Even in the country here, where he comes professedly to be idle, I took notice that we never saw him till near ten o'clock in the morning, and besides this, there were always some odd hours in the day in which he was not to be seen.

"We are apt to wonder at the prodigious quantity which he writes, and to imagine the labour must be commensurate. But, in point of fact, the quantity of mere writing is not very great. It certainly is immense if the quality be taken into view, but if the mere amount of handwriting be considered it is by no means large. Any clerk in an office would transcribe one of the *Waverley* novels, from beginning to end, in a week or ten days—say a fortnight. It is well known, or at least generally, and I have reason to believe truly admitted, that Sir Walter composes his works just as fast as he can write, that the manual labour is all that it costs him, for his thoughts flow spontaneously. He never corrects the press, or if he does so at all it is very slightly, and in general his works come before the public just as they are written. Now, such being the case, I really have no difficulty in supposing that a couple of hours every day before breakfast may be quite sufficient for all the MS. of *Waverley* novels produced in the busiest year since the commencement of the series."

CHAPTER XXII.

MARRIAGE OF SCOTT'S ELDEST SON—PUBLICATION OF TALES OF THE
CRUSADERS—PREPARATIONS FOR LIFE OF BUONAPARTE—MOORE AT
ABBOTSFORD.

WITH all his acuteness Captain Basil Hall does not seem to have caught any suspicion of the real purpose and meaning of the ball for which he was invited back to Abbotsford on the 9th of January, 1825. That evening was one of the very proudest and happiest in Scott's brilliant existence. Its festivities were held in honour of a young lady, whom the Captain names cursorily among the guests as "the pretty heiress of Lochore." It was known to not a few of the party, and I should have supposed it might have been surmised by the rest, that those halls were displayed for the first time in all their splendour on an occasion not less interesting to the poet than the conclusion of a treaty of marriage between the heir of his name and fortunes, and the amiable niece of his friends, Sir Adam and Lady Ferguson. It was the first regular ball given at Abbotsford, and the last. Nay, though twelve years have elapsed, I believe nobody has ever danced under that roof since then. I myself never again saw the whole range of apartments thrown open for the reception of company except once—on the day of Sir Walter Scott's funeral.

The lady's fortune was a handsome one, and her guardians exerted the powers with which they were invested, by requiring that the marriage-contract should settle Abbotsford (with reservation of Sir Walter's own liferent) upon the affianced parties, in the same manner as Lochore. To this condition he gave a ready assent, and the moment he had signed the deed, he exclaimed, "I have now parted with my lands with more pleasure than I ever derived from the acquisition or possession of them, and if I be spared for ten years, I think I may promise to settle as much more again upon these young folks." It was well for himself and his children that his auguries, which failed so miserably as to the matter of worldly wealth, were destined to no disappointment as respected considerations of a higher description. I transcribe one of the letters by which he communicated the happy event to the wide circle of friends who were sure to sympathize in his feelings of paternal satisfaction.

"MY DEAR LADY DAVY,—

"As I know the kind interest which you take in your very sincere friend and Scotch cousin, I think you will like to hear that my eldest hope, who, not many years ago, was too bashful to accept your offered salute, and procured me the happiness of a kiss on his account, beside that which I always claim on my own, has, as he has grown older, learned

a little better how such favours are to be estimated. In a word, Walter, then an awkward boy, has now turned out a smart young fellow, with good manners, and a fine figure, if a father may judge, standing well with the Horse Guards, and much master of the scientific part of his profession, retaining at the same time much of the simple honesty of his original character, though now travelled, and acquainted with courts and camps. Some one of these good qualities, I know not which, or whether it were the united force of the whole, and particularly his proficiency in the attack of strong places, has acquired him the affection and hand of a very sweet and pretty Mrs Anne Page, who is here as yet known by the name of Miss Jobson of Lochore, which she exchanges next week for that of Mrs Scott of Abbotsford. It would seem some old flirtation betwixt Walter and her had hung on both their minds, for at the conclusion of a Christmas party we learned the pretty heiress had determined to sing the old tune of—

“ ‘Mount and go—mount and make you ready,
Mount and go, and be a soldier’s lady’ ”

“Though her fortune be considerable, the favours of the public will enable me to make such settlements as her friends think very adequate. The only impediment has been the poor mother, a Highland lady of great worth and integrity, who could not brook parting with the sole object of her care and attention, to resign her to the vicissitudes of a military life, while I necessarily refused to let my son sink into a mere fox-hunting, snipe-shooting squire. She has at length been obliged to acquiesce rather than consent—her friends and counsellors being clear-sighted enough to see that her daughter’s happiness could scarce be promoted by compelling the girl to break off a mutual attachment, and a match with a young lieutenant of hussars, sure of having a troop very soon, with a good estate in reversion, and as handsome a fellow as ever put his foot in a stirrup. So they succeeded in bringing matters to a bearing, although old Papa has practised the ‘profane and unprofitable art of poem-making,’ and the youngster wears a pair of formidable mustachios. They are to be quiet at Abbotsford for a few days, and then they go to town to make their necessary purchases of carriage, and so forth, they are to be at my old friend Miss Dumergue’s, and will scarcely see any one, but as I think you will like to call on my dear little Jane, I am sure she will see you, and I know you will be kind and indulgent to her. Here is a long letter when I only meant a line. I think they will be in London about the end of February or beginning of March, and go from thence to Ireland, Walter’s leave of absence being short. My kindest compliments to Su Humphry, and pry acquaint him of this change in our family, which opens to me another vista in the dark distance of futurity, which, unless the lady had what Sir Hugh Evans calls *good gifts*, could scarce otherwise have happened during my lifetime—at least, without either imprudence on Walter’s part, or restrictions of habits of hospitality and comfort on my own—Always, dear Lady Davy, your affectionate and respectful friend and cousin,
“WALTER SCOTT.”

The marriage took place at Edinburgh on the 3rd day of February, and when the young couple left Abbotsford two or three weeks afterwards,

Sir Walter promised to visit them at their regimental quarters in Ireland in the course of the summer. Before he fulfilled that purpose he had the additional pleasure of seeing his son gazetted as Captain in the King's Hussars—a step for which Sir Walter advanced the large sum of £3,500.

In May, 1825, Sir Walter's friend Terry, and his able brother comedian, Mr Frederick Yates, entered on a negotiation, which terminated, in July, in their becoming joint lessees and managers of the Adelphi Theatre, London. Terry requested Scott and Ballantyne to assist him on this occasion by some advance of money, or, if that should be inconvenient, by the use of their credit. They were both very anxious to serve him, but Sir Walter had a poor opinion of speculations in theatrical property, and, moreover, entertained suspicions, too well justified by the result, that Terry was not much qualified for conducting the pecuniary part of such a business. Ultimately Ballantyne, who shared these scruples, became Terry's security for a considerable sum (I think £500), and Sir Walter pledged his credit in like manner to the extent of £1,250. He had, in the sequel, to pay off both this sum and that for which Ballantyne had engaged.

While this business of Terry's was under consideration, Scott asked me to go out with him one Saturday to Abbotsford, to meet Constable and James Ballantyne, who were to be there for a quiet consultation on some projects of great importance. I had shortly before assisted at a minor conclave held at Constable's villa of Polton, and was not surprised that Sir Walter should have considered his publisher's new plans worthy of very ample deliberation. He now opened them in more fulness of detail, and explained his views in a manner that might well excite admiration, not unmingled with alarm. Constable was meditating nothing less than a total revolution in the art and traffic of bookselling, and the exulting and blazing fancy with which he expanded and embellished his visions of success, hitherto undreamt-of in the philosophy of the trade, might almost have induced serious suspicions of his sanity, but for the curious accumulation of pregnant facts on which he rested his justification, and the dexterous sagacity with which he uncoiled his practical inferences. He startled us at the outset by saying, "Literary genius may, or may not, have done its best, but printing and bookselling, as instruments for enlightening and entertaining mankind, and, of course, for making money, are as yet in mere infancy. Yes, the trade are in their cradle." Scott eyed the florid bookseller's beaming countenance, and the solemn stare with which the equally portly printer was listening, and pushing round the bottles with a hearty chuckle, bade me "Give our two *sonsie babbies* a drop mother's milk." Constable sucked in fresh inspiration, and proceeded to say that, wild as we might think him, his new plans had been suggested by, and were in fact mainly grounded upon, a sufficiently prosaic authority—namely, the annual schedule of assessed taxes, a copy of which interesting document he drew from his pocket, and substituted for his *D'Oyley*. It was copiously diversified, "text and margin," by figures and calculations in his own handwriting, which I for one should have regarded with less reverence, had I known at the time this "great arithmetician's" rooted aversion and contempt for all examination of his own balance-sheet. His lecture on these columns and cyphers was, how-

ever, as profound as ingenious. He had taken vast pains to fill in the numbers of persons who might fairly be supposed to pay the taxes for each separate article of luxury, and his conclusion was that the immense majority of British families, endowed with liberal fortunes, had never yet conceived the remotest idea that their domestic arrangements were incomplete unless they expended some considerable sum annually upon the purchase of books. "Take," said he, "this one absurd and contemptible item of the tax on hair-powder, the use of it is almost entirely gone out of fashion. Bating a few parsons' and lawyers' wigs, it may be said that hair-powder is confined to the *flunkies*, and indeed to the livery servants of great and splendid houses exclusively, nay, in many even of these it is already quite laid aside. Nevertheless, for each head that is thus vilified in Great Britain, a guinea is paid yearly to the Exchequer, and the taxes in that schedule are an army, compared to the purchasers of even the best and most popular of books." He went on in the same vein about armorial bearings, hunters, racers, and four-wheeled carriages, and having demonstrated that hundreds of thousands in this magnificent country held, as necessary to their personal comfort and the maintenance of decent station, articles upon articles of costly elegance of which their forefathers never dreamt, said that on the whole, however usual it was to talk of the extended scale of literary transactions in modern days, our self-love never deceived us more grossly than when we fancied our notions as to the matter of books had advanced in at all a corresponding proportion. "On the contrary," cried Constable, "I am satisfied that the demand for Shakespeare's plays, contemptible as we hold it to have been, in the time of Elizabeth and James, was more creditable to the classes who really indulged in any sort of elegance then, than the sale of *Childe Harold* or *Waverley* triumphantly as people talk, is to the alleged expansion of taste and intelligence in this nineteenth century." Scott helped him on by interposing, that at that moment he had a rich valley crowded with handsome houses under his view, and yet much doubted whether any lord within ten miles spent ten pounds per annum on the literature of the day—which he, of course, distinguished from its periodical press. "No," said Constable, "there is no market among them that's worth one's thinking about. They are contented with a review or a magazine, or at best with a paltry subscription to some circulating library forty miles off. But if I live for half a dozen years, I'll make it as impossible that there should not be a good library in every decent house in Britain as that the shepherd's ingle-nook should want the *saut pôté*. Ay, and what's that?" he continued, warming and puffing. "Why should the ingle-nook itself want a shelf for the novels?" "I see your drift, my man," says Sir Walter. "You're for being like Billy Pitt in Gilray's print, you want to get into the salt-box yourself." "Yes," he responded (using a favourite adjuration), "I have hitherto been thinking only of the wax lights, but before I'm a twelvemonth older I shall have my hand upon the tallow." "Troth," says Scott, "you are indeed likely to be 'the grand Napoleon of the realms of print.'" "If you outlive me," says Constable, with a regal smile, "I bespeak that line for my tombstone, but, in the meantime, may I presume to ask you to be my right-hand man when I open my campaign of Marengo? I have now settled

my outline of operations—a three shilling or half-crown volume every month, which must and shall sell, not by thousands or tens of thousands, but by hundreds of thousands—ay, by millions ! Twelve volumes in the year, a halfpenny of profit upon every copy of which will make me richer than the possession of all the copyrights of all the quartos that ever were, or will be, hotpressed ! Twelve volumes, so good that millions must wish to have them, and so cheap that every butcher's callant may have them, if he pleases to let me tax him sixpence a week !”

Many a previous consultation, and many a solitary meditation too, prompted Scott's answer. “Your plan,” said he, “cannot fail, provided the books be really good, but you must not start until you have not only leading columns, but depth upon depth of reserve in thorough order. I am willing to do my part in this grand enterprise. Often of late have I felt that the vein of fiction was nearly worked out, often, as you all know, have I been thinking seriously of turning my hand to history. I am of opinion that historical writing has no more been adapted to the demands of the increased circles among which literature does already find its way, than you allege as to the shape and price of books in general. What say you to taking the field with a *Life of the other Napoleon* ?”

The reader does not need to be told that the series of cheap volumes, subsequently issued under the title of *Constable's Miscellany*, was the scheme on which the great bookseller was brooding. Before he left Abbotsford it was arranged that the first number of this collection should consist of one-half of *Waverley*, the second, of the first section of a *Life of Napoleon Buonaparte* by the author of *Waverley*, that this *Life* should be comprised in four of these numbers, and that, until the whole series of his novels should have been issued, a volume every second month, in this new and uncostly form, he should keep the Ballantyne press going with a series of historical works, to be issued on the alternate months. Such were, as far as Scott was concerned, the first outlines of a daring plan never destined to be carried into execution on the gigantic scale or with the grand appliances which the projector contemplated, but destined, nevertheless, to lead the way in one of the greatest revolutions that literary history will ever have to record—a revolution not the less sure to be completed, though as yet, after the lapse of twelve years,* we see only its beginning.

Some circumstances in the progress of the *Tales of the Crusaders*, begun some months before, and now on the eve of publication, must have been uppermost in Scott's mind when he met Constable's proposals on this occasion with so much alacrity. The story of *The Betrothed*—(to which he was mainly prompted by the lively and instructing conversation on Welsh history and antiquities of his friend Archdeacon Williams)—found no favour as it advanced with James Ballantyne; and so heavily did the critical printer's candid remonstrances weigh on the author, that he at length lost heart about the matter altogether, and determined to cancel it for ever. The tale, however, all but a chapter or two, had been printed off, and both publisher and printer paused about committing such a mass to the flames. The sheets were hung up meanwhile in Messrs Ballantyne's warehouse, and Scott, roused by the spur

* In 1837.—[EDIT]

of disappointment, began another story—The Talisman—in which James hailed better omens. His satisfaction went on increasing as the MS. flowed in upon him, and he at last pronounced The Talisman such a masterpiece, that The Betrothed might venture abroad under its wing. Sir Walter was now reluctant on that subject, and said he would rather write two more new novels than the few pages necessary to complete his unfortunate Betrothed. But while he hesitated, the German newspapers announced “*a new romance by the author of Waverley*” as about to issue from the press of Leipzig. There was some ground for suspecting that a set of the suspended sheets might have been purloined and sold to a pirate, and this consideration put an end to his scruples. And when the German did publish the fabrication entitled Walladmor, it could no longer be doubtful that some reader of Scott’s sheets had communicated at least the fact that he was breaking ground in Wales.

Early in June, then, the Tales of the Crusaders were put forth, and, as Mr Ballantyne had predicted, the brightness of The Talisman dazzled the eyes of the million as to the defects of the twin story. Few of these publications had a more enthusiastic greeting, and Scott’s literary plans were, as the reader will see reason to infer, considerably modified in consequence of the new burst of applause which attended the brilliant procession of his Saladin and Cœur de Lion.

To return for a moment to our merry conclave at Abbotsford. Constable’s vast chapter of embryo schemes was discussed more leisurely on the following Monday morning, when we drove to the crags of Smallholm and the Abbey of Dryburgh, both poet and publisher talking over the future course of their lives, and agreeing, as far as I could penetrate, that the years to come were likely to be more prosperous than any they had as yet seen. In the evening, too, this being his friend’s first visit since the mansion had been completed, Scott, though there were no ladies and few servants, had the hall and library lighted up, that he might show him everything to the most sparkling advantage. With what serenity did he walk about those splendid apartments, handling books, expounding armour and pictures, and rejoicing in the Babylon which he had built!

Sir Walter began, without delay, what was meant to be a very short preliminary sketch of the French Revolution, prior to the appearance of his hero upon the scene of action. This, he thought, might be done almost *currente calamo*, for his personal recollection of all the great events as they occurred was vivid, and he had not failed to peruse every book of any considerable importance on these subjects as it issued from the press. He apprehended the necessity, on the other hand, of more laborious study in the way of reading than he had for many years had occasion for, before he could enter with advantage upon Buonaparte’s military career, and Constable accordingly set about collecting a new library of printed materials, which continued from day to day pouring in upon him, till his little parlour in Castle Street looked more like an auctioneer’s premises than an author’s. The first waggon delivered itself of about a hundred huge folios of the *Moniteur*, and London, Paris, Amsterdam, and Brussels were all laid under contribution to meet the bold demand of his magnificent purveyor, while he himself and his confidential friends embraced every possible means of securing the use of

written documents at home and abroad. The rapid accumulation of books and MSS was at once flattering and alarming, and one of his notes to me, about the middle of June, had these rhymes by way of postscript.—

“When with poetry dealing
Room enough in a shieling
Neither cabin nor hovel
Too small for a novel,
Though my back I should rub
On Diogenes’ tub,
How my fancy could prance
In a dance of romance!
But my house I must swap
With some Brobdingnag chap
Ere I grapple, God bless me! with Emperor Nap.”

In the meantime he advanced with his Introduction, and, catching fire as the theme expanded before him, had soon several chapters in his desk, without having travelled over half the ground assigned for them, that Constable saw it would be in vain to hope for the completion of the work within four tiny duodecimos. They resolved that it should be published, in the first instance, as a separate book, in four volumes of the same size with the Tales of the Crusaders, but with more pages and more letterpress to each page. Scarcely had this been settled before it became obvious that four such volumes, however closely printed, would never suffice, and the number was week after week extended, with corresponding alterations as to the rate of the author’s payment. Mr Constable still considered the appearance of the second edition of the Life of Napoleon in his Miscellany as the great point on which the fortunes of that undertaking were to turn, and its commencement was in consequence adjourned, which, however, must have been the case at any rate, as he found, on inquiry, that the stock on hand of the already various editions of the Waverley novels was much greater than he had calculated, and therefore some interval must be allowed to elapse before, with fairness to the retail trade, he could throw that long series of volumes into any cheaper form.

Before the Court of Session rose in July, Sir Walter had made considerable progress in his Sketch of the French Revolution, but it was agreed that he should make his promised excursion to Ireland before any MS went to the printers. He had seen no more of the sister island than Dunlince and the Giant’s Causeway, his curiosity about the scenery and the people was lively, and besides the great object of seeing his son and daughter-in-law under their own roof, and the scarcely inferior pleasure of another meeting with Miss Edgeworth, he looked forward to renewing his acquaintance with several accomplished persons who had been serviceable to him in his labours upon Swift. But, illustriously as Ireland has contributed to the English library, he had always been accustomed to hear that almost no books were now published there, and fewer sold than in any other country calling itself civilized, and he had naturally concluded that apathy and indifference prevailed as to literature itself, and of course as to literary men. He had not, therefore, formed the re-

mostest anticipation of the kind of reception which awaited him in Dublin, and indeed throughout the island wherever he traversed it

It did not suit either Lady Scott or her eldest daughter to be of the Irish expedition, Anne Scott and myself accompanied Sir Walter. We left Edinburgh on the 8th of July in a light open carriage, and after spending a few days among our friends in Lanarkshire, we embarked at Glasgow in a steamer for Belfast.

The steamboat, besides a crowd of passengers of all possible classes, was lumbered with a cargo offensive enough to the eye and the nostrils, but still more disagreeable from the anticipations and reflections it could not fail to suggest. Hardly had our carriage been lashed on the deck before it disappeared from our view amidst mountainous packages of old clothes—the cast-off raiment of the Scotch beggars was on its way to a land where beggary is the staple of life. The captain assured us that he had navigated nearly forty years between the west of Scotland and the sister island, and that his freights from the Clyde were very commonly of this description, pigs and potatoes being the usual return. Sir Walter rather irritated a military passenger (a stout old Highlander), by asking whether it had never occurred to him that the beautiful checkery of the clan tartans might have originated in a pious wish on the part of the Scottish Gael to imitate the tatters of the parent race. After soothing the veteran into good-humour by some anecdotes of the Celtic splendours of August, 1822, he remarked that if the Scotch Highlanders were really descended in the main from the Irish blood, it seemed to him the most curious and difficult problem in the world to account for the startling contrasts in so many points of their character, temper, and demeanour, and entered into some disquisition on this subject, which I am sorry I cannot repeat in detail. The sum of his opinion was that, while courage and generous enthusiasm of spirit, kindness of heart, and great strength and purity of domestic affection characterized them equally, the destruction, in the course of endless feuds, and wars, and rebellions, of the native aristocracy of Ireland, had robbed that people of most of the elements of internal civilization, and avowed his belief that had the Highlanders been deprived, under similar circumstances, of their own chiefs, they would have sunk, from the natural poverty of their regions, into depths of barbarity not exemplified even in the history of Ireland. The old soldier, who had taken an early opportunity of intimating his own near relationship to the chief of his sept, nodded assent, and strutted from our part of the deck with the dignity of a MacTurk. “But then,” Sir Walter continued, watching the Colonel’s retreat, “but then comes the queerest point of all. How is it that our solemn, proud, dignified Celt, with a soul so alive to what is elevating and even elegant in poetry and feeling, is so supremely dull as respects all the lighter play of fancy? The Highlander never understands wit or humour—Paddy, despite all his misery and privations, overflows with both. I suppose he is the gayest fellow in the world, except the only worse-used one still, the West India nigger. This is their make-up, but it is to me the saddest feature in the whole story.”

A voyage down the Firth of Clyde is enough to make anybody happy: nowhere can the home tourist, at all events, behold, in the course of

one day, such a succession and variety of beautiful, romantic, and majestic scenery. on one hand, dark mountains and castellated shores, on the other, rich groves and pastures, interspersed with elegant villas and thriving towns, the bright estuary between alive with shipping and diversified with islands. It may be supposed how delightful such a voyage was in a fine day of July, with Scott, always as full of glee on any trip as a schoolboy, crammed with all the traditions and legends of every place we passed and too happy to pour them out for the entertainment of his companions on deck. After dinner, too, he was the charm of the table. A worthy old bailie of Glasgow, Mr Robert Tennent, sat by him, and shared fully in the general pleasure, though his particular source of interest and satisfaction was, that he had got into such close quarters with a live Sheriff and Clerk of Session, and this gave him the opportunity of discussing sundry knotty points of police law, as to which our steerage passengers might perhaps have been more curious than most of those admitted to the symposium of the cabin. Sir Walter, however, was as ready for the rogueries of the Broomielaw as for the misty antiquities of Balclutha, or the discomfiture of the Norsemen at Largs, or Bruce's adventures in Arran. I remember how Mr Tennent chuckled when he, towards the conclusion of our first bowl of punch, said he was not surprised to find himself gathering much instruction from the bailie's conversation on his favourite topics, since the most eminent and useful of the police magistrates of London (Colquhoun) had served his apprenticeship in the Town Chamber of Glasgow. The bailie insisted for a second bowl, and volunteered to be the manufacturer, "For," quoth he, with a sly wink, "I am reckoned a fair hand, though not equal to *my father, the deacon*." Scott smiled in acquiescence, and, the ladies having by this time withdrawn, said he was glad to find the celebrated beverage of the city of St Mungo had not fallen into desuetude. The bailie extolled the liquor he was brewing, and quoted Sir John Sinclair's Code of Health and Longevity for the case of a gentleman well known to himself, who lived till ninety, and had been drunk upon it every night for half a century. But Bailie Tennent was a devout elder of the kirk, and did not tell his story without one or two groans that his doctrine should have such an example to plead. A gay little Irish squireen, a keener Protestant even than our "merchant and magistrate," did not seem to have discovered the Great Unknown until about this time, and now began to take a principal share in the conversation. He broke at once into the heart of the debatable land, and after a few fierce tirades against Popery, asked the Highland Colonel, who had replaced the master of the steamer at the head of the table, to give *the glorious memory*. The prudent Colonel affected not to hear until this hint had been thrice repeated, watching carefully meanwhile the demeanour of a sufficiently mixed company. The general pushing in of glasses, and perhaps some freemasonry symptoms besides—for we understood that he had often served in Ireland—had satisfied him that all was right, and he rose and announced the Protestant Shibboleth with a voice that made the lockers and rafters ring again. Bailie Tennent rose with grim alacrity to join in the cheers; and then our squireen proposed, in his own person, what, he said, always ought to be the second toast among

good men and true. This was nothing else than the heroic memory, which from our friend's preliminary speech, we understood to be the memory of *Oliver Cromwell*. Sir Walter winced more shrewdly than his bawle had done about Ephraim's transgressions, but swallowed his pinch, and stood up, glass in hand, like the rest, though an unfortunate fit of coughing prevented his taking part in their huzzas. This feature of Irish loyalism was new to the untravell'd Scotch of the party. On a little reflection, however, we thought it not so unnatural. Our little squireen boasted of being himself descended from a sergeant in Cromwell's army, and he added that "the best in Ireland" had similar pedigrees to be proud of. He took care however, to inform us that his own great ancestor was a real *gentleman* all over, and behaved as such; "For," said he, "when Oliver gave him his order for the lands he went to the widow, and told her he would neither turn out her nor the best-looking of her daughters, so get the best dinner you can, old lady," quoth he, "and parade the whole lot of them, and I'll pick." Which was done, it seems accordingly, and probably no conquest ever wanted plenty of such alleviations.

When we got upon deck again after our carousal, we found it raining heavily, and the lady passengers in great misery, which state of things continued till we were within sight of Belfast. We got there about nine in the morning and I find it set down that we paid four guineas for the conveyance of the carriage, and a guinea apiece for ourselves, in 1837. I understand the charge for passengers is not more than half a crown a head in the cabin, and sixpence in the steerage—so rapidly has steam navigation extended in the space of twelve years.

When we halted at Drogheda, a retired officer of dragoons, discovering that the party was Sir Walter's sent in his card with a polite offer to attend him over the field of the battle of the Boyne, about two miles off, which of course was accepted. Sir Walter rejoicing the veteran's heart by his vigorous recitation of the famous ballad (*The Crossing of the Water*) as we proceeded to the ground, and the eager and intelligent curiosity with which he received his explanations of it.

On Thursday the 14th we reached Dublin in time for dinner, and found young Walter and his bride established in one of those large and noble houses in St. Stephen's Green (the most extensive square in Europe), the founders of which little dreamt that they should ever be let at an easy rate as garrison lodgings. Never can I forget the fond joy and pride with which Sir Walter looked round him as he sat for the first time at his son's table. I could not but recall Pindar's lines, in which wishing to paint the gentlest rapture of felicity, he describes an old man with a foaming wine-cup in his hand at his child's wedding feast.

That very evening arrived a deputation from the Royal Society of Dublin, inviting Sir Walter to a public dinner, and next morning he found on his breakfast-table a letter from the Provost of Trinity College (Dr. Keble, now Bishop of Cork), announcing that the University desired to pay him the very high compliment of a degree of Doctor of Laws by *Honoris*. The Archbishop of Dublin (the celebrated Dr. Magee) though troubled with severe domestic afflictions at the time, was among the earliest of his visitors, another was the Attorney-General (afterwards

Lord Chancellor Plunket), a third was the Commander of the Forces, Sir George Murray; and a fourth the Chief Remembrancer of Exchequer (the Right Honourable Anthony Blake), who was the bearer of a message from the Marquis Wellesley, then Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, offering all sorts of facilities, and inviting him to dine next day at his Excellency's country residence, Malahide Castle. It would be endless to enumerate the distinguished persons who, morning after morning, crowded his *levée* in St Stephen's Green. The Courts of Law were not then sitting, and most of the Judges were out of town, but all the other great functionaries, and the leading noblemen and gentlemen of the city and its neighbourhood, of whatever sect or party, hastened to tender every conceivable homage and hospitality. But all this was less surprising to the companions of his journey (though, to say truth, we had, no more than himself, counted on such eager enthusiasm among any class of Irish society) than the demonstrations of respect which, after the first day or two, awaited him, wherever he moved, at the hands of the less elevated orders of the Dublin population. If his carriage was recognized at the door of any public establishment, the street was sure to be crowded before he came out again, so as to make his departure as slow as a procession. When he entered a street, the watchword was passed down both sides like lightning, and the shopkeepers and their wives stood bowing and curtsying all the way down, while the mob and boys huzza'd as at the chariot-wheels of a conqueror. I had certainly been most thoroughly unprepared for finding the common people of Dublin so alive to the claims of any non-military greatness. Sir Robert Peel says that Sir Walter's reception on the High Street of Edinburgh, in August, 1822, was the first thing that gave him a notion of "the electric shock of a nation's gratitude." I doubt if even that scene surpassed what I myself witnessed when he returned down Dame Street, after inspecting the Castle of Dublin. Baillie Tennent, who had been in the crowd on that occasion, called afterwards in Stephen's Green to show Sir Walter some promised return about his Glasgow police, and observed to me, as he withdrew, that "*you* was owre like worshipping the creature."

I may as well, perhaps, extract from a letter of the 16th, the contemporary note of one day's operations. "Sir Humphry Davy is here on his way to fish in Connemara, he breakfasted at Walter's this morning, also Hartstonge, who was to show the lions of St. Patrick's. Peveril was surprised to find the exterior of the cathedral so rudely worked, coarse, and almost shapeless, but the interior is imposing, and even grand. There are some curious old monuments of the Cork family, &c., but one thinks of nothing but Swift there—the whole cathedral is merely his tomb. Your papa hung long over the famous inscription,* which is in gilt letters upon black marble, and seemed vexed there was not a ladder at hand that he might have got nearer the bust (apparently a very fine one), by Roubilliac, which is placed over it. This was given by the piety of his printer, Faulkener. According to this, Swift had a prodigious double chin; and Peveril remarked that the severity of the whole countenance is much increased by the absence of the wig, which, in the prints, conceals

* The terrible inscription is "Hic depositum est corpus Jonathan Swift, S T P &c., ubi sua indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit."

the height and gloom of the brow, the uncommon massiveness and breadth of the temple-bones, and the Herculean style in which the head fits into the neck behind. Stella's epitaph is on the adjoining pillar—close by. Sir Walter seemed not to have thought of it before (or to have forgotten, if he had), but to judge merely from the wording that Swift himself wrote it. She is described as 'Mrs Hester Johnson, better known to the world by the name of Stella, under which she is celebrated in the writings of Dr Jonathan Swift, Dean of this cathedral.' 'This,' said Sir Walter, 'the Dean might say—any one else would have said more.' She died in 1727, Swift in 1745. Just by the entrance to the transept is his tablet in honour of the servant who behaved so well about the secret of the Drapier's Letters. We then saw St. Sepulchre's Library, a monastic-looking place, very like one of the smaller college libraries in Oxford. Here they have the folio Clarendon, with Swift's marginal remarks, mostly in pencil, but still quite legible. 'Very savage as usual upon us poor Scots every where,' quoth the Unknown. We then went into the Deanery (the one Swift inhabited has been pulled down), and had a most courteous and elegant reception from the Dean, the Honourable Dr Ponsonby. He gave us a capital luncheon—the original full-length picture of the Dean over the sideboard. The print in the Edinburgh edition is very good, but the complexion is in the picture black, robust, sanguine, a heavy-lidded, stern blue eye. It was interesting to see how completely the *genius loci* has kept his ground. Various little relics reverently hoarded as they should be. They said his memory was as fresh as ever among the common people about, they still sing his ballads, and had heard with great delight that Sir Walter wrote a grand book all about the great Dane. The

"'Jolly lads of St. Patrick's, St. Kevin's, Donore,'

"mustered strong and stentorian at our exit. They would, like their great grandfathers and mothers, have torn the Unknown to pieces, had he taken the other tack, and

"'Insulted us all by insulting the Dean.'"

"We next saw the Bank, late Parliament House, the Dublin Society's Museum, where papa was enchanted with a perfect skeleton of the gigantic moose-deer, the horns fourteen feet from tip to tip, and high in proportion, and a long train of other fine places and queer things, all as per road-book. Everywhere throughout this busy day, fine folks within doors and rabble without, a terrible rushing and crushing to see the Baronet. Lord Wellington could not have exerted a better rumpus. But the theatre in the evening completed the thing. I never heard such a row. The players might as well have had no tongues. Beatrice (Miss Foote) twice left the stage, and at last Benedick (Abbot, who is the manager) came forward, cunning dog, and asked what was the cause of the tempest. A thousand voices shouted, *Sir Walter Scott!* and the worthy lion being thus bearded and poked, rose, after an hour's torture, and said, with such a kindness and grace of tone and manner, *these words*—'I am sure the Irish people—(a roar)—I am sure this respectable audience will not suppose that a stranger can be insensible to the kind-

ness of their reception of him, and if I have been too long in saying this, I trust it will be attributed to the right cause—my unwillingness to take to myself honours so distinguished, and which I could not and cannot but feel to be unmerited’ I think these are the very words The noise continued, a perfect cataract and thunder of roaring, but he would take no hints about going to the stage-box, and the evening closed decently enough The theatre is very handsome, the dresses and scenery capital, the actors and actresses seemed (but, to be sure, this was scarcely a fair specimen) about as bad as in the days of Croker’s Familiar Epistles”

On Monday the 18th, to give another extract. “Young Mr Maturin breakfasted, and Sir Walter asked a great deal about his late father and the present situation of the family, and promised to go and see the widow When the young gentleman was gone, Hartstonge told us that Maturin used to compose with a wifer pasted on his forehead, which was the signal that if any of his family entered the *sanctum* they must not speak to him. ‘He was never bred in a writer’s *chaumer*,’ quoth Peveril. Sir Walter observed that it seemed to be a piece of Protestantism in Dublin to drop the saintly titles of the Catholic Church they call St. Patrick’s, Patrick’s; and St. Stephen’s Green has been Orangeized into Stephen’s He said you might trace the Puritans in the plain *Powles* (for St Paul’s) of the old English comedians We then went to the Bank, where the Governor and Directors had begged him to let *themselves* show him everything in proper style, and he was forced to say, as he came out, ‘These people treated me as if I was a Prince of the Blood’ I do believe that, just at this time, the Duke of York might be treated as well—better he could not be From this to the College hard by The Provost received Sir W. in a splendid drawing-room, and then carried him through the libraries, halls, &c, amidst a crowd of eager students He received his diploma in due form, and there followed a superb *déjeuner* in the Provostry Neither Oxford nor Cambridge could have done the whole thing in better style Made acquaintance with Dr Brinkley, Astronomer Royal, and Dr Macdonnell, Professor of Greek, and all the rest of the leading professors, who vied with each other in respect and devotion to the Unknown 19th—I forgot to say that there is one *true* paragraph in the papers One of the College librarians yesterday told Sir W, fishingly, ‘I have been so busy that I have not yet read *your* Redgauntlet’ He answered, very meekly, ‘I have not happened to fall in with such a work, Doctor.’”

From Dublin we made an excursion of some days into the county Wicklow, halting for a night at the villa of the Surgeon-General, Mr Crampton, who struck Sir Walter as being more like Sir Humphry Davy than any man he had met, not in person only, but in the liveliness and range of his talk, and who kindly did the honours of Lough Breagh and the Dargle; and then for two or three at Old Connaught, Lord Plunket’s seat near Bray Here there was a large and brilliant party assembled, and from hence, under the guidance of the Attorney-General and his amiable family, we perambulated to all possible advantage the classical resorts of the Devil’s Glen, Rosanna, Kilruddery, and Glendalough, with its seven churches, and *St Kevin’s Bed*—the scene of the fate of Cathleen, celebrated in Moore’s ballad—

"By that lake whose gloomy shore
Skylark never warbles o'er," &c

"It is," says my letter, "a hole in the sheer surface of the rock, in which two or three people might sit. The difficulty of getting into this place has been exaggerated, as also the danger, for it would only be falling thirty or forty feet into very deep water. Yet I never was more pained than when your papa, in spite of all remonstrances, would make his way to it, crawling along the precipice. He succeeded and got in, the first lame man that ever tried it. After he was gone, Mr Plunket told the female guide he was a poet. Cathleen treated this with indignation, as a quizz of Mr Attorney's. 'Poet!' said she, 'the devil a bit of him, but an honourable gentleman. he gave me half a crown.'"

On the 1st of August we proceeded from Dublin to Edgeworthstown, the party being now reinforced by Captain and Mrs Scott, and also by the delightful addition of the Surgeon-General, who had long been an intimate friend of the Edgeworth family, and equally gratified both the novelists by breaking the toils of his great practice to witness their meeting on his native soil. A happy meeting it was we remained there for several days, making excursions to Loch Oel and other scenes of interest in Longford and the adjoining counties; the gentry everywhere exerting themselves with true Irish zeal to signalize their affectionate pride in their illustrious countrywoman, and their appreciation of her guest, while her brother, Mr Lovell Edgeworth, had his classical mansion filled every evening with a succession of distinguished friends, the *élite* of Ireland. Here, above all, we had the opportunity of seeing in what universal respect and comfort a gentleman's family may live in that country, and in far from its most favoured district, provided only they live there habitually, and do their duty as the friends and guardians of those among whom Providence has appointed their proper place. Here we found neither mud hovels nor naked peasantry, but snug cottages and smiling faces all about. Here there was a very large school in the village, of which masters and pupils were in a nearly equal proportion Protestants and Roman Catholics, the Protestant squire himself making it a regular part of his daily business to visit the scene of their operations, and strengthen authority and enforce discipline by his personal superintendence. Here, too, we pleased ourselves with recognizing some of the sweetest features in Goldsmith's picture of

"Sweet Auburn! loveliest village of the plain,"

and, in particular, we had "the playful children just let loose from school" in perfection. Mr. Edgeworth's paternal heart delighted in letting them make a playground of his lawn, and every evening after dinner we saw leap-frog going on with the highest spirit within fifty yards of the drawing-room windows, while fathers and mothers, and their aged parents also, were grouped about among the trees watching the sport. It is a curious enough coincidence that Oliver Goldsmith and Maria Edgeworth should both have derived their early love and knowledge of Irish character and manners from the same identical district. He received part of his education at this very school of Edgeworthstown, and Pallasmore (the *locus cur nomen est Pallas* of Johnson's epitaph), the

little hamlet where the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield* first saw the light, is still, as it was in his time, the property of the Edgeworths.

It may well be imagined with what lively interest Sir Walter surveyed the scenery with which so many of the proudest recollections of Ireland must ever be associated, and how curiously he studied the rural manners it presented to him, in the hope (not disappointed) of being able to trace some of his friend's bright creations to their first hints and germs. On the delight with which he contemplated her position in the midst of her own large and happy domestic circle I need say still less. The reader is aware by this time how deeply he condemned and pitied the conduct and fate of those who, gifted with pre-eminent talents for the instruction and entertainment of their species at large, fancy themselves entitled to neglect those every-day duties and charities of life, from the mere shadowing of which in imaginary pictures the genius of poetry and romance has always reaped its highest and purest, perhaps its only true and immortal honours. In Maria he hailed a sister spirit, one who, at the summit of literary fame, took the same modest, just, and, let me add, *Christian* view of the relative importance of the feelings, the obligations, and the hopes in which we are all equally partakers, and those talents and accomplishments which may seem, to vain and shortsighted eyes, sufficient to constitute their possessors into an order and species apart from the rest of their kind. Such fantastic conceits found no shelter with either of these powerful minds. I was then a young man, and I cannot forget how much I was struck at the time by some words that fell from one of them, when, in the course of a walk in the park at Edgeworthstown, I happened to use some phrase which conveyed (though not perhaps meant to do so) the impression that I suspected poets and novelists of being a good deal accustomed to look at life and the world only as materials for art. A soft and pensive shade came over Scott's face as he said, "I fear you have some very young ideas in your head—are you not too apt to measure things by some reference to literature, to disbelieve that anybody can be worth much care who has no knowledge of that sort of thing, or taste for it? God help us! what a poor world this would be if that were the true doctrine!" I have read books enough, and observed and conversed with enough of eminent and splendidly cultivated minds, too, in my time; but, I assure you, I have heard higher sentiments from the lips of poor *uneducated* men and women, when exerting the spirit of severe yet gentle heroism under difficulties and afflictions, or speaking their simple thoughts as to circumstances in the lot of friends and neighbours, than I ever yet met with out of the pages of the Bible. We shall never learn to feel and respect our real calling and destiny, unless we have taught ourselves to consider everything as moonshine, compared with the education of the heart." Maria did not listen to this without some water in her eyes—her tears are always ready when any generous string is touched—(for, as Pope says, "the finest minds, like the finest metals, dissolve the easiest"), but she brushed them gaily aside, and said, "You see how it is. Deau Swift said he had written his books in order that people might learn to treat him like a great lord. Sir Walter writes his, in order that he may be able to treat his people as a great lord ought to do."

Lest I should forget to mention it, I put down here a rebuke which,

later in his life, Sir Walter once gave in my hearing to his daughter Anne. She happened to say of something, I forget what, that she could not abide it—it was *vulgar*. “My love,” said her father, “you speak like a very young lady—do you know, after all, the meaning of this word *vulgar*? ’Tis only *common*; nothing that is common, except wickedness, can deserve to be spoken of in a tone of contempt, and when you have lived to my years, you will be disposed to agree with me in thanking God that nothing really worth having or caring about in this world is *uncommon*.”

At Edgeworthstown he received the following letter from Mr Canning—

“Combe Wood, July 24, 1825.

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“A pretty severe indisposition has prevented me from sooner acknowledging your kind letter; and now I fear that I shall not be able to accomplish my visit to Scotland this year. Although I shall be, for the last fortnight of August, at no great distance from the Borders, my time is so limited that I cannot reckon upon getting farther.

“I rejoice to see that my countrymen (for, though I was accidentally born in London, I consider myself an Irishman) have so well known the value of the honour which you are paying to them.

“By the way, if you landed at Liverpool on your return, could you find a better road to the north than through the Lake country? You would find me (from about the 10th of August) and Charles Ellis* at my friend Mr. Bolton’s, on the banks of Windermere, where I can promise you as kind, though not so noisy a welcome as that which you have just experienced, and where our friend the Professor (who is Admiral of the Lake) would fit out all his flotilla, and fire as many of his guns as are not painted ones, in honour of your arrival. Yours, my dear sir, very sincerely,

“GEO CANNING”

This invitation was not to be resisted; and the following letter announced a change of the original route to Mr. Morritt.

“Edgeworthstown, Aug 3, 1825.

“Your kind letter, my dear Morritt, finds me sweltering under the hottest weather I ever experienced, for the sake of seeing sights—of itself, you know, the most feverish occupation in the world. Luckily we are free of Dublin; and there is nothing around us but green fields and fine trees, ‘barring the high roads,’ which make those who tread on them the most complete *gnepoudreux* ever seen; that is, if the old definition of *gnepoudres* be authentic, and if not, you may seek another dusty simile for yourself—it cannot exceed the reality. I have with me Lockhart and Anne, Walter and his *cara sposa*, for all whom the hospitality of Edgeworthstown has found ample space and verge enough. Indeed it is impossible to conceive the extent of this virtue in all classes, I don’t think even our Scottish hospitality can match that of Ireland. Everything seems to give way to the desire to accommodate a stranger, and I really believe the story of the Irish harper, who condemned his harp to the

* New Lord Seaford.

flames for want of firewood to cook a guest's supper. Their personal kindness to me has been so great, that were it not from the chilling recollection that novelty is easily substituted for merit, I should think, like the booby in Steele's play, that I had been *kept back*, and that there was something more about me than I had ever been led to suspect. As I am LL D of Trinity College, and am qualified as a Catholic seer, by having mounted up into the bed of Saint Kevin at the celebrated seven churches of Glendalough, I am entitled to prescribe, *ex cathedra*, for all the diseases of Ireland, as being free both of the Catholic and Protestant parties. But the truth is that Pat, while the doctors were consulting, has been gradually and securely recovering of himself. He is very loth to admit this, indeed, there being a strain of hypochondria in his complaints which will not permit him to believe he's getting better. Nay, he gets even angry when a physician, more blunt than polite, continues to assure him that he is better than he supposes himself, and that much of his present distress consists partly of the recollection of former indisposition, partly of the severe practice of modern empirics.

"In sober sadness, to talk of the misery of Ireland at this time is to speak of the illness of *malade imaginaire*. Well she is not, but she is rapidly becoming so. There are all the outward and visible tokens of convalescence. Everything is mending: the houses that arise are better a hundredfold than the cabins which are falling, the peasants of the younger class are dressed a great deal better than with the rags which clothe the persons of the more ancient Teagues, which realize the wardrobe of Jenny Sutton, of whom Morris sweetly sings—

" 'One single pin at night let loose
The robes which veiled her beauty ' "

"I am sure I have seen with apprehension a single button perform the same feat, and when this mad scarecrow hath girded up his loins to run hastily by the side of the chaise, I have feared it would give way, and that then, as King Lear's fool says, we should all be shamed. But this, which seems once to have generally been the attire of the fair of the Green Isle, probably since the time of King Malachi and the collar of gold, is now fast disappearing, and the habit of the more youthful Pats and Patesses is more decent and comely. Here they all look well coloured, and well fed, and well contented, and as I see in most places great exertions making to reclaim bogs upon a large scale, and generally to improve ground, I must needs hold that they are in constant employment.

"With all this there is much that remains to be amended, and which time and increase of capital only can amend. The price of labour is far too low, and this naturally reduces the labouring poor beyond their just level in society. The behaviour of the gentry in general to the labourers is systematically harsh, and this arrogance is received with a servile deference which argues anything excepting affection. This, however, is also in the course of amending. I have heard a great deal of the far-famed Catholic Question from both sides, and I think I see its bearings better than I did, but these are for your ear when we meet—as meet we shall—if no accident prevent it. I return *via* Holyhead, as I wish to show Anne

something of England, and you may believe that we shall take Rokeby in our way To-morrow I go to Killarney, which will occupy most part of the week About Saturday I shall be back at Dublin to take leave of friends, and then for England, ho! I will, avoiding London, seek a pleasant route to Rokeby Fate will only allow us to rest there for a day or two, because I have some desire to see Canning, who is to be on the Lakes about that time *Et finis* My leave will be exhausted Anne and Lockhart send kindest compliments to you and the ladies I am truly rejoiced that Mrs John Morritt is better Indeed, I had learned that agreeable intelligence from Lady Louisa Stuart I found Walter and his wife living happily and rationally, affectionately, and prudently There is great good sense and quietness about all Jane's domestic arrangements, and she plays the leaguer's lady very prettily I will write again when I reach Britain, and remain ever yours, "WALTER SCOTT"

Miss Edgeworth, her sister Harriet, and her brother William, were easily persuaded to join our party for the rest of our Irish travels We had lingered a week at Edgeworthstown, and were now anxious to make the best of our way towards the Lakes of Killarney, but posting was not to be very rapidly accomplished in those regions by so large a company as had now collected, and we were more agreeably delayed by the hospitalities of Miss Edgeworth's old friends, and several of Sir Walter's new ones, at various mansions on our line of route, of which I must note especially Judge Moore's, at Lamberton, near Maryborough, because Sir Walter pronounced its beneficence to be even beyond the usual Irish scale, for on reaching our next halting-place, which was an indifferent country inn, we discovered that we need be in no alarm as to our dinner at all events, the Judge's people having privately packed up in one of the carriages, ere we started in the morning, a pickled salmon, a most lordly venison pasty, and half a dozen bottles of champagne But most of these houses seemed, like the Judge's, to have been constructed on the principle of the Peri Banou's tent They seemed all to have room not only for the lion and lionesses, and their respective tails, but for all in the neighbourhood who could be held worthy to inspect them at feeding-time

It was a succession of festive gaiety wherever we halted; and in the course of our movements we saw many castles, churches, and ruins of all sorts, with more than enough of mountain, wood, lake, and river to have made any similar progress in any other part of Europe truly delightful in all respects But those of the party to whom the south of Ireland was new had almost continually before them spectacles of abject misery, which robbed these things of more than half their charm Sir Walter, indeed, with the habitual hopefulness of his temper, persisted that what he saw even in Kerry was better than what books had taught him to expect, and insured, therefore, that improvement, however slow, was going on But ever and anon, as we moved deeper into the country, there was a melancholy in his countenance, and, despite himself, in the tone of his voice, which I for one could not mistake The constant passings and re-passings of bands of mounted policemen, armed to the teeth, and having quite the air of highly disciplined soldiers on sharp service, the rueful squalid poverty that crawled by every wayside, and blocked up every vil-

lage where we had to change horses, with exhibitions of human suffering and degradation such as it had never entered into our heads to conceive, and, above all, the contrast between these naked clamorous beggars, who seemed to spring out of the ground at every turn like swarms of vermin, and the boundless luxury and merriment surrounding the thinly scattered magnates who condescended to inhabit their ancestral seats, would have been sufficient to poison those landscapes had Nature dressed them out in the verdure of Arcadia, and art embellished them with all the temples and palaces of old Rome and Athens. It is painful enough even to remember such things, but twelve years can have made but a trifling change in the appearance of a country which, so richly endowed by Providence with every element of wealth and happiness, could, at so advanced a period of European civilization, sicken the heart of the stranger by such widespread manifestations of the wanton and reckless profligacy of human mismanagement, the withering curse of feuds and factions, and the tyrannous selfishness of absenteeism, and I fear it is not likely that any contemporary critic will venture to call my melancholy picture overcharged. A few blessed exceptions—such an aspect of ease and decency, for example, as we met everywhere on the vast domain of the Duke of Devonshire—served only to make the sad reality of the rule more flagrant and appalling. Taking his bed-room candle one night, in a village on the Duke's estate, Sir Walter summed up the strain of his discourse by a line of Shakespeare's—

“Sweet mercy is nobility's true badge ”

There was, however, abundance of ludicrous incidents to break this gloom; and no traveller ever tasted either the humours or the blunders of Paddy more heartily than did Sir Walter. I find recorded in one letter a very merry morning at Limerick, where, amidst the ringing of all the bells in honour of the advent, there was ushered in a brother poet, who must needs pay his personal respects to the author of *Marmion*. He was a scarecrow figure—attired much in the fashion of the *strugglers*—by name O'Kelly, and he had produced on the spur of the occasion this modest parody of Dryden's famous epigram.—

“Three poets, of three different nations born,
The United Kingdom in this age adorn,
Byron of England, Scott of Scotia's blood,
And Erin's pride—O'Kelly, great and good ”

Sir Walter's five shillings were at once forthcoming, and the bard, in order that Miss Edgeworth might display equal generosity, pointed out, in a little volume of his works (for which, moreover, we had all to subscribe), this pregnant couplet:—

“Scott, Morgan, Edgeworth, Byron, prop of Greece,
Are characters whose fame not soon will cease ”

We were still more amused (though there was real misery in the case) with what befell on our approach to a certain pretty seat, in a different county, where there was a collection of pictures and curiosities not usually shown to travellers. A gentleman, whom we had met in Dublin, had been accompanying us part of the day's journey, and volunteered, being acquainted with the owner, to procure us easy admission. At the entrance

of the domain, to which we proceeded under his wing, we were startled by the dolorous apparition of two undertaker's men, in voluminous black scarfs, though there was little or nothing of black about the rest of their habiliments, who sat upon the highway before the gate with a whiskey-bottle on a deal table between them. They informed us that the master of the house had died the day before, and that they were to keep watch and ward in this style until the funeral, inviting all Christian passengers to drink a glass to his repose. Our *cicerone* left his card for the widow, having previously, no doubt, written on it the names of his two lions. Shortly after we regained our post-house he received a polite answer from the lady. To the best of my memory it was in these terms:—

"Mrs. — presents her kind compliments to Mr. —, and much regrets that she cannot show the pictures to-day, as Major — died yesterday evening by apoplexy; which Mrs. — the more regrets, as it will prevent her having the honour to see Sir Walter Scott and Miss Edgeworth."

Sir Walter said it reminded him of a woman in Fife, who, summing up the misfortunes of a black year in her history, said—"Let me see, sirs, first, we lost our wee callant, and then Jenny, and then the gude-man himself died, and then the *coo* died too, poor hizzey, but, to be sure, her hide brought me fifteen shillings."

At one county gentleman's table where we dined, though two grand full-length daubs of William and Mary adorned the walls of the room, there was a mixed company—about as many Catholics as Protestants, all apparently on cordial terms, and pledging each other lustily in bumpers of capital claret. About an hour after dinner, however, punch was called for, tumblers and jugs of hot water appeared, and with them two magnums of whiskey, the one bearing on its label King's, the other Queen's. We did not at first understand these inscriptions, but it was explained, *sotto voce*, that the King's had paid the duty, the Queen's was of contraband origin, and, in the choice of the liquors, we detected a new shibboleth of party. The jolly Protestants to a man stuck to the King's bottle—the equally radiant Papists paid their duty to the Queen's.

Since I have alluded at all to the then grand dispute, I may mention, that, after our tour was concluded, we considered with some wonder that, having partaken liberally of Catholic hospitality, and encountered almost every other class of society, we had not sat at meat with one specimen of the Romish priesthood, whereas, even at Popish tables, we had met dignitaries of the Established Church. This circumstance we set down at the time as amounting pretty nearly to a proof that there were few gentlemen in that order, but we afterwards were willing to suspect that a prejudice of their own had been the source of it. The only incivility which Sir Walter Scott ultimately discovered himself to have encountered (for his friends did not allow him to hear of it at the time) in the course of his Irish peregrination, was the refusal of a Roman Catholic gentleman, named O'Connell, who kept staghounds near Killarney, to allow of a hunt on the upper lake, the day he visited that beautiful scenery. This he did, as we are told, because he considered it as a notorious fact that Sir Walter Scott was an enemy to the Roman Catholic claims for admission to seats in Parliament. He was entirely mistaken, however; for, though

no man disapproved of Romanism as a system of faith and practice more sincerely than Sir Walter always did, he had long before this period formed the opinion, that no good could come of further resistance to the claim in question. He had on all occasions expressed manfully his belief that the best thing for Ireland would have been never to relax the strictly *political* enactments of the penal laws, however harsh these might appear. Had they been kept in vigour for another half-century, it was his conviction that Popery would have been all but extinguished in Ireland. But he thought that, after admitting Romanists to the elective franchise, it was a vain notion that they could be permanently or advantageously debarred from using that franchise in favour of those of their own persuasion. The greater part of the charming society into which he fell while in Ireland entertained views and sentiments very likely to confirm these impressions, and it struck me that considerable pains were taken to enforce them. It was felt, probably, that the crisis of decision drew near, and there might be a natural anxiety to secure the suffrage of the great writer of the time. The polished amenity of the Lord-Lieutenant set off his commanding range of thought and dexterous exposition of facts to the most captivating advantage. "The Marquis's talk," says Scott, in a letter of the following year, "gave me the notion of the kind of statesmanship that one might have expected in a Roman emperor, accustomed to keep the whole world in his view, and to divide his hours between ministers like Mecenas and wits like Horace." The acute logic and brilliant eloquence of Lord Plunket he ever afterwards talked of with high admiration, nor had he, he said, encountered in society any combination of qualities more remarkable than the deep sagacity and the broad rich humour of Mr Blake. In Plunket, Blake, and Crampton, he considered himself as having gained three real friends by this expedition, and I think I may venture to say that the feeling on their side was warmly reciprocal.

Having crossed the hills from Killarney to Cork, where a repetition of the Dublin reception—corporation honours, deputations of the literary and scientific societies, and so forth—awaited him, he gave a couple of days to the hospitality of this flourishing town, and the beautiful scenery of the Shannon, not forgetting an excursion to the Groves of Blarney, among whose shades we had a right mirthful picnic. Sir Walter scrambled up to the top of the castle, and kissed, with due faith and devotion, the famous *Blarney Stone*, one salute of which is said to emancipate the pilgrim from all future visitations of *mauvaise honte*.

"The stone this is, whoever kisses,
He never misses to grow eloquent—
'Tis he may clamber to a lady's chamber,
Or be a Member of Parliament."

But the shamefacedness of our young female friends was not exposed to an inspection of the works of art, celebrated by the poetical Dean of Cork as the prime ornaments of the Lady Jefferies's "station"—

"The statues growing that noble place in,
Of heathen goddesses most rare—
Homer, Venus, and Nebuchadnezzar,
All standing naked in the open air."

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT

These had disappeared, and the castle and all its appurtenances were in a state of woeful dilapidation and neglect.

From Cork we proceeded to Dublin by Fermoy, Lismore, Cashel, Kilkenny, and Holyross—at all of which places we were bountifully entertained and assiduously eieroned—to our old quarters in St. Stephen's Green, and after a morning or two spent in taking leave of many kind faces that he was never to see again, Sir Walter and his original fellow-travellers started for Holyhead on the 18th of August. Our progress through North Wales produced nothing worth recording, except perhaps the feeling of delight which everything in the aspect of the common people, their dress, their houses, their gardens, and their husbandry, could not fail to call up in persons who had just been seeing Ireland for the first time, and a short visit (which was, indeed, the only one he made) to the far-famed "ladies" of Llangollen. They had received some hint that Sir Walter meant to pass their way, and on stopping at the inn, he received an invitation so pressing to add one more to the long list of the illustrious visitors of their retreat, that it was impossible for him not to comply. We had read histories and descriptions enough of these romantic spinsters, and were prepared to be well amused, but the reality surpassed all expectation.

An extract from a gossiping letter of the following week will perhaps be sufficient for Llangollen

" * * * We slept on Wednesday evening at Capel Carg, which Sir W. supposes to mean the Chapel of the Crag, a pretty little inn in a most picturesque situation certainly, and as to the matter of toasted cheese, quite exquisite. Next day we advanced through, I verily believe, the most perfect gem of a country eye ever saw, having almost all the wildness of Highland backgrounds, and all the loveliness of rich English landscape nearer us, and streamis like the purest and most babbling of our own. At Llangollen your papa was waylaid by the celebrated 'Ladies'—Lady Eleanor Butler and the Honourable Miss Ponsonby, who having been one or both crossed in love, forswore all dreams of matrimony in the heyday of youth, beauty, and fashion, and selected this charming spot for the repose of their now time-honoured virginity. It was many a day, however, before they could get implicit credit for being the innocent friends they really were, among the people of the neighbourhood, for their elopement from Ireland had been performed under suspicious circumstances, and as Lady Eleanor arrived here in her natural aspect of a pretty girl, while Miss Ponsonby had been condemned to accompany her in the garb of a smart footman in buckskin breeches, years and years elapsed ere full justice was done to the character of their romance. We proceeded up the hill, and found everything about them and their habitation odd and extravagant beyond report. Imagine two women, one apparently 70, the other 65, dressed in heavy blue riding habits, enormous shoes, and men's hats, with their petticoats so tucked up, that at the first glance of them, fussing and tottering about their porch in the agony of expectation, we took them for a couple of hazy or crazy old sailors. On nearer inspection they both wear a world of brooches, rings, &c., and Lady Eleanor positively orders—several stars and crosses, and a red ribbon,

exactly like a K.C.B. To crown all, they have crop heads, shaggy, rough, bushy, and as white as snow, the one with age alone, the other assisted by a sprinkling of powder. The elder lady is almost blind, and every way much decayed, the other, the *ex-de-vant* groom, in good preservation. But who could paint the prints, the dogs, the cats, the miniatures, the cram of cabinets, clocks, glass-cases, books, *byouterie*, dragon china, nodding mandarins, and whirligigs of every shape and hue—the whole house outside and in (for we must see everything to the dressing-closets), covered with carved oak, very rich and fine some of it, and the illustrated copies of Sir W's poems, and the joking simpering compliments about Waverley, and the anxiety to know who MacIvor really was, and the absolute devouring of the poor Unknown, who had to carry off, besides all the rest, one small bit of literal *butter* dug up in a Milesian stone jar lately from the bottom of some Irish bog. Great romance, &c, absurd innocence of character, one must have looked for, but it was confounding to find this mixed up with such eager curiosity, and enormous knowledge of the tattle and scandal of the world they had so long left. Their tables were piled with newspapers from every corner of the kingdom, and they seemed to have the deaths and marriages of the antipodes at their fingers' ends. Their albums and autographs, from Louis XVIII and George IV down to magazine poets and quack doctors, are a museum. I shall never see the spirit of blue-stockings again in such perfect incarnation. Peveril won't get over their final kissing match for a week. Yet it is too bad to laugh at these good old girls. They have long been the guardian angels of the village, and are worshipped by man, woman, and child about them."

This letter was written on the banks of Windermere, where we were received with the warmth of old friendship by Mr Wilson, and one whose grace and gentle goodness could have found no lovelier or fitter home than Elleray, except where she is now.

Mr Bolton's seat, to which Canning had invited Scott, is situated a couple of miles lower down on the same Lake, and thither Mr Wilson conducted him next day. A large company had been assembled there in honour of the minister—it included already Mr Wordsworth and Mr Southey. It has not, I suppose, often happened to a plain English merchant, wholly the architect of his own fortunes, to entertain at one time a party embracing so many illustrious names. He was proud of his guests, they respected him, and honoured and loved each other, and it would have been difficult to say which star in the constellation shone with the brightest or the softest light. There was "high discourse," intermingled with as gay flashings of courtly wit as ever Canning displayed, and a plentiful allowance on all sides of those airy transient pleasantries in which the fancy of poets, however wise and grave, delights to run riot when they are sure not to be misunderstood. There were beautiful and accomplished women to adorn and enjoy this circle. The weather was as Elysian as the scenery. There were brilliant cavalcades through the woods in the mornings, and delicious boatings on the lake by moonlight, and the last day "the Admiral of the Lake" presided over one of the most splendid regattas that ever enlivened Windermere. Perhaps there were not fewer than fifty barges following in the Professor's radiant pro-

cession, when it paused at the Point of Storrs to admit into the place of honour the vessel that carried kind and happy Mr Bolton and his guests. The three bards of the Lakes led the cheers that hailed Scott and Canning, and music and sunshine, flags, streamers, and gay dresses, the merry hum of voices, and the rapid splashing of innumerable oars, made up a dazzling mixture of sensations as the flotilla wound its way among the richly-foliaged islands, and along bays and promontories peopled with enthusiastic spectators.

On at last quitting the festive circle of Storrs, we visited the family of the late Bishop Watson at Calgarth, and Mr Wordsworth at his charming retreat of Mount Rydal. He accompanied us to Keswick, where we saw Mr Southey re-established in his unrivalled library. Mr Wordsworth and his daughter then turned with us, and passing over Kirkstone to Ulswater, conducted us first to his friend Mr Marshall's elegant villa, near Lyulph's Tower, and on the next day to the noble castle of his life-long friend and patron Lord Lonsdale. The Earl and Countess had their halls filled with another splendid circle of distinguished persons, who, like them, lavished all possible attentions and demonstrations of respect upon Sir Walter. He remained a couple of days, and perambulated, under Wordsworth's guidance, the superb terraces and groves of the "fair domain" which that poet has connected with the noblest monument of his genius. But the temptations of Storrs and Lowther had cost more time than had been calculated upon, and the promised visit to Rokeby was unwillingly abandoned. Sir Walter reached Abbotsford again on the 1st of September, and said truly that "his tour had been one ovation."

Without an hour's delay Sir Walter resumed his usual habits of life at Abbotsford, the musing ramble among his own glens, the breezy ride over the moors, the merry spell at the woodman's axe, or the festive chase of Newark, Fernilee, Hangingshaw, or Deloraine, the quiet old-fashioned contentment of the little domestic circle, alternating with the brilliant phantasmagoria of admiring, and sometimes admired, strangers, or the hoisting of the telegraph flag that called laird and bonnet-laird to the burning of the water or the wassail of the hall. The hours of the closet alone had found a change. The preparation for the *Life of Napoleon* was a course of such hard reading as had not been called for while "the great magician," in the full sunshine of ease, amused himself and delighted the world, by unrolling, fold after fold, his endlessly varied panorama of romance. That miracle had to all appearance cost him no effort. Unmoved and serene among the multiplicities of worldly business, and the invasions of half Europe and America, he had gone on tranquilly enjoying rather than exerting his genius, in the production of those masterpieces which have peopled all our firesides with inexpensive friends, and rendered the solitary supremacy of Shakespeare, as an all-comprehensive and genial painter of man, no longer a proverb.

He had, while this was the occupation of his few desk-hours, read only for his diversion. How much he read, even then, his correspondence may afford some notion. Those who observed him the most constantly were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up to the stream of contemporary literature of almost all

sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring, may easily be guessed, but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim *never to be doing nothing*. He had no "unconsidered trifles" of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours now-a-days with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the reviews and magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little.

He had now to apply himself doggedly to the mastering of a huge accumulation of historical materials. He read, and noted, and indexed with the pertinacity of some pale compiler in the British Museum, but rose from such employment, not radiant and buoyant, as after he had been feasting himself among the teeming harvests of Fancy, but with an aching brow, and eyes on which the dimness of years had begun to plant some specks, before they were subjected again to that straining over small print and difficult manuscript which had, no doubt, been familiar to them in the early time, when (in Shortreed's phrase) "he was making himself." It was a pleasant sight when one happened to take a passing peep into his den, to see the white head erect, and the smile of conscious inspiration on his lips, while the pen, held boldly and at a commanding distance, glanced steadily and gaily along a fast-blackening page of "The Talisman." It now often made me sorry to catch a glimpse of him, stooping and poring with his spectacles, amidst piles of authorities, a little note-book ready in the left hand, that had always used to be at liberty for patting Maida. To observe this was the more painful, because I had at that time to consult him about some literary proposals, the closing with which would render it necessary for me to abandon my profession and residence in Edinburgh, and with them the hope of being able to relieve him of some part of the minor labours in which he was now involved; an assistance on which he had counted when he undertook this historical task. There were then about me, indeed, cares and anxieties of various sorts that might have thrown a shade even over a brighter vision of his interior. For the circumstance that finally determined me, and reconciled him as to the proposed alteration in my views of life, was the failing health of an infant equally dear to us both. It was, in a word, the opinion of our medical friends, that the short-lived child of many and high hopes, whose name will go down to posterity with one of Sir Walter's most precious works, could hardly survive another northern winter, and we all flattered ourselves with the anticipation that my removal to London at the close of 1825 might pave the way for a happy resumption of the cottage at Chiefswood in the ensuing summer. *Dis aliter visum.*

During the latter months of 1825, while the matter to which I have alluded was yet undecided, I had to make two hurried journeys to London, by which I lost the opportunity of witnessing Sir Walter's reception of several eminent persons with whom he then formed or ratified a friendship—among others the late admirable Master of the Rolls, Lord

Gifford, and his Lady—who spent some days at Abbotsford, and detected nothing of the less agreeable features in its existence which I have been dwelling upon, Dr Philpotts, since Bishop of Exeter; and also the brother bard, who had expressed his regret at not being present “when Scott and Killarney were introduced to each other” No more welcome announcement ever reached Scott than Mr Moore’s of his purpose to make out, that same season, his long-meditated expedition to Scotland

Mr Moore fortunately found Sir Walter in an interval of repose—no one with him at Abbotsford but Lady and Miss Scott, and no company at dinner except the Fergusons and Laidlaw The two poets had thus the opportunity of a great deal of quiet conversation, and from the hour they met, they seem to have treated each other with a full confidence, the record of which, however touchingly honourable to both, could hardly be made public *in extenso* while one of them survives The first day they were alone after dinner, and the talk turned chiefly on the recent death of Byron, from which Scott passed unaffectedly to his own literary history Mr Moore listened with great interest to details, now no longer new, about the early days of ballad-hunting, Mat Lewis, the Minstrelsy, and the Poems, and “at last,” says he, “to my no small surprise, as well as pleasure, he mentioned the novels, without any reserve, as his own He gave me an account of the original progress of those extraordinary works, the hints supplied for them, the conjectures and mystification to which they had given rise, &c., &c.,” he concluded with saying, “they have been a mine of wealth to me, but I find I fail in them now, I can no longer make them so good as at first.” This frankness was met as it should have been by the brother poet, and when he entered Scott’s room next morning, “he laid his hand,” says Mr Moore, “with a sort of cordial earnestness on my breast, and said, *Now, my dear Moore, we are friends for life*” They sallied out for a walk through the plantations, and among other things, the commonness of the poetic talent in these days was alluded to “Hardly a magazine is now published,” said Moore, “that does not contain verses which some thirty years ago would have made a reputation” Scott turned with his look of shrewd humour, as if chuckling over his own success, and said, “Ecod, we were in the luck of it to come before these fellows,” but he added, playfully flourishing his stick as he spoke, “we have, like Bobadil, taught them to beat us with our own weapons” “In complete novelty,” says Moore, “he seemed to think lay the only chance for a man ambitious of high literary reputation in these days”

At Melrose, writes Mr Moore, “With the assistance of the sexton, a shrewd, sturdy-mannered original, he explained to me all the parts of the ruin, after which we were shown up to a room in the sexton’s house, filled with casts done by himself, from the ornaments, heads, &c., of the abbey Seeing a large niche empty, Scott said, ‘Johnny, I’ll give you a Virgin and Child to put in that place’ Never did I see a happier face than Johnny’s at this news—it was all over smiles. ‘But, Johnny,’ continued Scott, as we went downstairs, ‘I’m afraid, if there should be another anti-popish rising, you’ll have your house pulled about your ears’ When we had got into the carriage, I said, ‘You have made that man most truly happy’ ‘Ecod, then,’ he replied, ‘there are two of us

pleased, for I was very much puzzled to know what to do with that Virgin and Child; and mamma particularly' (meaning Lady Scott) 'will be delighted to get rid of it.' A less natural man would have allowed me to remain under the impression that he had really done a very generous thing

In handing to me the pages from which I have taken these scraps, Mr Moore says,—“I parted from Scott with the feeling that all the world might admire him in his works, but that those only could learn to love him as he deserved who had seen him at Abbotsford. I give you *carte blanche* to say what you please of my sense of his cordial kindness and gentleness, perhaps a not very dignified phrase would express my feeling better than any fine one—it was that he was a *thorough good fellow*”

The author of Lallah Rookh's Kelso chaise was followed before many days by a more formidable equipage. The much talked-of lady who began life as Miss Harriet Mellon, a comic actress in a provincial troupe, and died Duchess of St Albans, was then making a tour in Scotland as Mrs Coutts, the enormously wealthy widow of the first English banker of his time. No person of such consequence could, in those days, have thought a Scotch progress complete unless it included a reception at Abbotsford; but Mrs. Coutts had been previously acquainted with Sir Walter, who, indeed, had some remote connection with her late husband's family, through the Stuarts of Allanbank, I believe, or perhaps the Swintons of Swinton. He had visited her occasionally in London during Mr. Coutts's life, and was very willing to do the honours of Teviotdale in return. But although she was considerate enough not to come on him with all her retinue, leaving four of the seven carriages with which she travelled at Edinburgh, the appearance of only three coaches, each drawn by four horses, was rather trying for poor Lady Scott. They contained Mrs. Coutts, her future lord the Duke of St. Albans, one of his Grace's sisters, a *dame de compagnie*, a brace of physicians, for it had been considered that one doctor might himself be disabled in the course of an expedition so adventurous, and, besides other menials of every grade, two bedchamber women for Mrs Coutts's own person, she requiring to have this article also in duplicate, because, in her widowed condition, she was fearful of ghosts, and there must be one Abigail for the service of the toilet, a second to keep watch by night. With a little puzzling and cramming, all this train found accommodation, but it so happened that there were already in the house several ladies, Scotch and English, of high birth and rank, who felt by no means disposed to assist their host and hostess in making Mrs Coutts's visit agreeable to her. They had heard a great deal, and they saw something of the ostentation almost inseparable from wealth so vast as had come into her keeping. They were on the outlook for absurdity and merriment; and I need not observe how effectually women of fashion can contrive to mortify, without doing or saying anything that shall expose them to the charge of actual incivility.

Sir Walter, during dinner, did everything in his power to counteract this influence of *the evil eye*, and something to overawe it; but the spirit of mischief had been fairly stirred, and it was easy to see that Mrs. Coutts followed these noble dames to the drawing-room in by no means that

complacent mood which was customarily sustained, doubtless by every blandishment of obsequious flattery, in this mistress of millions. He cut the gentlemen's sederunt short, and soon after joining the ladies managed to withdraw the youngest, and gayest, and cleverest, who was also the highest in rank (a lovely Marchioness), into his armorial-hall adjoining "I said to her" (he told me), "I want to speak a word with you about Mrs. Coutts. We have known each other a good while, and I know you won't take anything I can say in ill part. It is, I hear, not uncommon among the fine ladies in London to be very well pleased to accept invitations, and even sometimes to hunt after them, to Mrs. Coutts's grand balls and fêtes, and then, if they meet her in any private circle, to practise on her the delicate *manœuvre* called *tipping the cold shoulder*. This you agree with me is shabby, but it is nothing new, either to you or to me, that fine people will do shabbinesses for which beggars might blush, if they once stoop so low as to poke for tickets. I am sure you would not for the world do such a thing, but you must permit me to take the great liberty of saying that I think the style you have all received my guest, Mrs. Coutts, in this evening is, to a certain extent, a sin of the same order. You were all told a couple of days ago that I had accepted her visit, and that she would arrive to-day to stay three nights. Now, if any of you had not been disposed to be of my party at the same time with her, there was plenty of time for you to have gone away before she came, and as none of you moved, and it was impossible to fancy that any of you would remain out of mere curiosity, I thought I had a perfect right to calculate on your having made up your minds to help me out with her." The beautiful peeress answered, "I thank you, Sir Walter, you have done me the great honour to speak as if I had been your daughter, and depend upon it you shall be obeyed with heart and good-will." One by one the other exclusives were seen engaged in a little *tête-à-tête* with her ladyship. Sir Walter was soon satisfied that things had been put into a right train; the Marchioness was requested to sing a particular song, *because* he thought it would please Mrs. Coutts. "Nothing could gratify her more than to please Mrs. Coutts." Mrs. Coutts's brow smoothed, and in the course of half an hour she was as happy and easy as ever she was in her life, rattling away at comical anecdotes of her early theatrical years, and joining in the chorus of Sir Adam's *Laird of Cockpen*. She stayed out her three days*—saw, accompanied by all the circle, Melrose, Dryburgh, and Yarrow—and left Abbotsford delighted with her host, and to all appearance with his other guests.

It may be said (for the most benevolent of men had in his lifetime, and still has, some maligners) that he was so anxious about Mrs. Coutts's comfort because he worshipped wealth. I dare not deny that he set more of his affections, during great part of his life, upon worldly things, wealth among others, than might have become such an intellect. One may conceive a sober grandeur of mind, not incompatible with genius as rich as even his, but infinitely more admirable than any genius, incapable of brooding upon any of the pomps and vanities of this life, or caring about

* Sir Walter often quoted the maxim of an old lady in one of Miss Fernier's novels—that a visit should never exceed three days, "the rest day—the dress day—and the prett day."

money at all beyond what is necessary for the easy sustenance of nature. But we must, in judging the most powerful of minds, take into account the influences to which they were exposed in the plastic period, and where imagination is visibly the predominant faculty, allowance must be made very largely indeed. Scott's autobiographical fragment, and the anecdotes annexed to it, have been printed in vain if they have not conveyed the notion of such a training of the mind, fancy, and character as could hardly fail to suggest dreams and aspirations very likely, were temptation presented, to take the shape of active external ambition, to prompt a keen pursuit of those resources, without which visions of worldly splendour cannot be realized. But I think the subsequent narrative, with the correspondence embodied in it, must also have satisfied every candid reader that his appetite for wealth was, after all, essentially a vivid yearning for the means of large beneficence. As to his being capable of the silliness—to say nothing of the meanness—of allowing any part of his feelings or demeanour towards others to be affected by their mere possession of wealth, I cannot consider such a suggestion as worthy of much remark. He had a kindness towards Mrs Coutts because he knew that, vain and pompous as her displays of equipage and attendance might be, she mainly valued wealth, like himself, as the instrument of doing good. Even of her apparently most fantastic indulgences he remembered, as Pope did when ridiculing the "lavish cost and little skill" of his Timon,

"Yet hence the poor are clothed, the hungry fed,"

but he interfered, to prevent her being made uncomfortable in his house, neither more nor less than he would have done had she come there in her original character of a comic actress, and been treated with coldness as such by the Marchionesses and Countesses.

Since I have been led to touch on what many always considered as the weak part of his character—his over-respect for worldly things in general—I must say one word as to the matter of rank, which undoubtedly had infinitely more effect on him than money. In the first place, he was all along courted by the great world—not it by him, and, secondly, pleased as he was with its attentions, he derived infinitely greater pleasure from the trusting and hearty affection of his old equals, and the inferiors whose welfare he so unweariedly promoted. But, thirdly, he made acute discriminations among the many different orders of claimants who jostle each other for pre-eminence in the curiously complicated system of modern British society. His imagination had been constantly exercised in recalling and embellishing whatever features of the past it was possible to connect with any pleasing ideas, and a historical name was a charm that literally stirred his blood. But not so a mere title. He revered the Duke of Buccleuch, but it was not as a Duke, but as the head of his clan—the representative of the old knights of Branksholm. In the Duke of Hamilton he saw not the premier peer of Scotland, but the lineal heir of the heroic old Douglasses, and he had profounder respect for the chief of a Highland clan, without any title whatever, and with an ill-paid rental of two or three thousand a year, than for the haughtiest magnate in a blue ribbon whose name did not call up any grand historical reminiscence. I remember once when he had some

young Englishmen of high fashion in his house, there arrived a Scotch gentleman of no distinguished appearance, whom he received with a sort of eagerness and *empressement* of reverential courtesy that struck the strangers as quite out of the common. His name was that of a Scotch earl, however, and no doubt he was that nobleman's son. "Well," said one of the Southrons to me, "I had never heard that the Earl of — was one of your very greatest lords in this country, even a second son of his, booby though he be, seems to be of wonderful consideration." The young English lord heard with some surprise that the visitor in question was a poor lieutenant on half-pay, heir to a tower about as crazy as Don Quixote's, and noways related (at least according to English notions of relationship) to the Earl of —. "What, then," he cried, "what *can* Sir Walter mean?" "Why," said I, "his meaning is very clear. This gentleman is the male representative (which the Earl of — may possibly be in the female line) of a knight who is celebrated by our old poet Blind Harry, as having signalized himself by the side of Sir William Wallace, and from whom every Scotchman that bears the name of — has at least the ambition of being supposed to descend."—Sir Walter's own title came unsought, and that he accepted it, not in the foolish fancy that such a title, or any title, could increase his own personal consequence, but because he thought it fair to embrace the opportunity of securing a certain external distinction to his heirs at Abbotsford, was proved pretty clearly by his subsequently declining the greatly higher, but intansmissible rank, of a Privy Councillor. At the same time, I daresay his ear liked the knightly sound, and undoubtedly he was much pleased with the pleasure his wife took, and gaily acknowledged she took, in being My Lady.

The circumstances of the King's visit in 1822, and others already noted, leave no doubt that imagination enlarged and glorified for him many objects to which it is very difficult for ordinary men in our generation to attach much importance, and perhaps he was more apt to attach importance to such things, during the prosperous course of his own fortunes, than even a liberal consideration of circumstances can altogether excuse. To myself it seems to have been so, yet I do not think the severe critics on this part of his story have kept quite sufficiently in mind how easy it is for us all to undervalue any species of temptation to which we have not happened to be exposed. I am aware, too, that there are examples of men of genius, situated to a certain extent like him, who have resisted and repelled the fascination against which he was not entirely proof, but I have sometimes thought that they did so at the expense of parts of their character nearer the marrow of humanity than those which his weakness in this way tended to endamage, that they mingled, in short, in their virtuous self-denial, some grains of sacrifice at the shrine of a cold, unsocial, even sulky species of self-conceit. But this digression has already turned out much longer than I intended.

Mrs Coutts and her three coaches astonished Abbotsford but a few days after I returned to Cliefswood from one of my rapid journeys to London. While in the metropolis on that occasion, I had heard a great deal more than I understood about the commercial excitement of the time. For several years preceding 1825 the plethora of gold on the one hand

and the wildness of impatient poverty on the other, had been uniting their stimulants upon the blood and brain of the most curious of all concretes, individual or national, "John Bull," nor had sober "Sister Peg" escaped the infection of disorders which appear to recur, at pretty regular periods, in the sanguine constitution of her brother. They who had accumulated great masses of wealth, dissatisfied with the usual rates of interest under a conscientious Government really protective of property, had embarked in the most perilous and fantastic schemes for piling visionary Pelions upon the real Ossa of their money-bags, and unscrupulous dreamers, who had all to gain and nothing to lose, found it easy to borrow, from cash-encumbered neighbours, the means of pushing adventures of their own devising, more extravagant than had been heard of since the days of the South Sea and Mississippi bubbles. Even persons who had extensive and flourishing businesses in their hands, partook the general rage of infatuation. He whose own shop, counting-house, or warehouse had been sufficient to raise him to a decent and safely-increasing opulence, and was more than sufficient to occupy all his attention, drank in the vain delusion that he was wasting his time and energy on things unworthy of a masculine ambition, and embarked the resources necessary for the purposes of his lawful calling in speculations worthy of the land-surveyors of El Dorado. It was whispered that the trade (so called, *par excellence*) had been bitten with this fever, and persons of any foresight who know (as I did not at that time know) the infinitely curious links by which booksellers, and printers, and paper-makers (and therefore authors) are bound together, high and low, town and country, for good and for evil, already began to prophesy that, whenever the general crash, which must come ere long, should arrive, its effects would be felt far and wide among all classes connected with the productions of the press. When it was rumoured that this great bookseller, or printer, had become a principal holder of South American mining shares—that another was the leading director of a railway company—a third of a gas company—while a fourth house had risked about £100,000 in a cart upon the most capricious of all agricultural products, *hops*—it was no wonder that bankers should begin to calculate balances and pause upon discounts.

Among other hints to the tune of *periculosum plenum opus aleæ* which reached my ear, were some concerning a splendid bookselling establishment in London, with which I knew the Edinburgh house of Constable to be closely connected in business. Little suspecting the extent to which any mischance of Messrs Hurst and Robinson must involve Sir Walter's own responsibilities, I transmitted to him the rumours in question as I received them. Before I could have his answer, a legal friend of mine, well known to Scott also, told me that people were talking doubtfully about Constable's own stability. I thought it probable that if Constable fell into any pecuniary embarrassments, Scott might suffer the inconvenience of losing the copy-money of his last novel. Nothing more serious occurred to me. But I thought it my duty to tell him this whisper also, and heard from him, almost by return of post, that, shake who might in London, his friend in Edinburgh was "rooted, as well as branched, like the oak." Knowing his almost painfully ascetic habits of business as to matters of trivial moment, I doubted not that he had

ample grounds for being quite easy as to any concerns of his own with his publisher, and though I turned northwards with anxiety enough, none of the burden had reference to that subject.

A few days, however, after my arrival at Chiefswood, I received a letter from the legal friend already alluded to—(Mr William Wright, the eminent barrister of Lincoln's Inn, who, by the way, was also on habits of great personal familiarity with Constable, and liked *the Czar* exceedingly)—which renewed my apprehensions, or rather, for the first time, gave me any suspicion that there really might be something "rotten in the state of *Muscovy*" Mr Wright informed me that it was reported in London that Constable's London banker had thrown up his book. This letter reached me about five o'clock, as I was sitting down to dinner, and about an hour afterwards I rode over to Abbotsford to communicate its contents. I found Sir Walter alone over his glass of whiskey and water and cigar—at this time, whenever there was no company, "his custom always in the afternoon." I gave him Mr Wright's letter to read. He did so, and returning it, said, quite with his usual tranquil good humour of look and voice, "I am much obliged to you for coming over, but you may rely upon it Wright has been hoaxed. I promise you, were the Crafty's book thrown up, there would be a pretty decent scramble among the bankers for the keeping of it. There may have been some little dispute or misunderstanding, which malice and envy have exaggerated in this absurd style, but I shan't allow such nonsense to disturb my *siesta*. Don't you see," he added, lighting another cigar, "that Wright could not have heard of such a transaction the very day it happened? And can you doubt that if Constable had been informed of it yesterday, this day's post must have brought me intelligence direct from him?" I ventured to suggest that this last point did not seem to me clear, that Constable might not, perhaps, in such a case, be in so great a hurry with his intelligence. "Ah!" said he, "the Crafty and James Ballantyne have been so much connected in business, that Fatsman would be sure to hear of anything so important, and I like the notion of his hearing it, and not sending me one of his malagrougous *billets doux*. He could as soon keep his eyebrows in their place if you told him there was a fire in his nursery."

Seeing how coolly he treated my news, I went home relieved and gratified. Next morning, as I was rising, behold Peter Mathieson at my door, his horses evidently off a journey, and the Sheriff rubbing his eyes as if the halt had shaken him out of a sound sleep. I made what haste I could to descend, and found him by the side of a brook, looking somewhat worn, but with a serene and satisfied countenance, busied already in helping his little grandson to feed a fleet of ducklings. "You are surprised," he said, "to see me here. The truth is, I was more taken aback with Wright's epistle than I cared to let on, and so, as soon as you left me, I ordered the carriage to the door, and never stopped till I got to Polton, where I found Constable putting on his nightcap. I stayed an hour with him, and I have now the pleasure to tell you that *all is right*. There was not a word of truth in the story. He is fast as Ben Lomond, and as mamma and Anne did not know what my errand was, I thought it as well to come and breakfast here, and set Sophia and you at your ease before I went home again."

We had a merry breakfast, and he chatted gaily afterwards as I escorted him through his woods, leaning on my shoulder all the way, which he seldom as yet did, except with Tom Purdie, unless when he was in a more than commonly happy and affectionate mood. But I confess the impression this incident left on my mind was not a pleasant one. It was then that I first began to harbour a suspicion, that if anything should befall Constable, Sir Walter would suffer a heavier loss than the non-payment of some one novel. The night journey revealed serious alarm. My wife suggested, as we talked things over, that his alarm had been, not on his own account, but Ballantyne's, who, in case evil came on the great employer of his types, might possibly lose a year's profit on them, which neither she nor I doubted must amount to a large sum, any more than that a misfortune of Ballantyne's would grieve her father as much as one personal to himself. His warm regard for his printer could be no secret, we well knew that James was his confidential critic—his trusted and trustworthy friend from boyhood.

It is proper to add here that the story about the banker's throwing up the book was, as subsequent revelations attested, groundless. Sir Walter's first guess as to its origin proved correct.

A few days afterwards, Mr Murray, of Albemarle Street, sent me a transcript of Lord Byron's *Ravenna Diary*, with permission for my neighbour also to read it if he pleased. Sir Walter read those extraordinary pages with the liveliest interest, and filled several of the blank leaves and margins with illustrative annotations and anecdotes, some of which have lately been made public, as the rest will doubtless be hereafter. In perusing what Byron had jotted down from day to day in the intervals of regular composition, it very naturally occurred to Sir Walter that the noble poet had done well to avoid troubling himself by any adoption or affectation of plan or order—giving an opinion, a reflection, a reminiscence, serious or comic, or the incidents of the passing hour, just as the spirit moved him, and seeing what a mass of curious things, such as "aftertimes would not willingly let die," had been thus rescued from oblivion at a very slight cost of exertion, he resolved to attempt keeping thenceforth a somewhat similar record. A thick quarto volume, bound in vellum, with a lock and key, was forthwith procured; and Sir Walter began the journal, from which I shall begin, in the next chapter, to draw copiously. The occupation of a few stray minutes in his dressing-room at getting up in the morning, or after he had retired for the night, was found a pleasant variety for him. He also kept the book by him when in his study, and often had recourse to it when anything puzzled him and called for a halt in the prosecution of what he considered, though posterity will hardly do so, a more important task. It was extremely fortunate that he took up this scheme exactly at the time when he settled seriously to the history of Buonaparte's personal career. The sort of preparation which every chapter of that book now called for has been already alluded to, and, although, when he had fairly read himself up to any one great cycle of transactions, his old spirit roused itself in full energy, and he traced the record with as rapid and glowing a pencil as he had ever wielded—there were minutes enough, and hours, and perhaps days, of weariness, depression, and languor, when (unless this silent con-

fidant had been at hand) even he perhaps might have made no use of his writing-desk.

Even the new resource of journalizing, however, was not sufficient. He soon convinced himself that it would facilitate, not impede, his progress with Napoleon, to have a work of imagination in hand also. The success of the *Tales of the Crusaders* had been very high, and Constable, well aware that it had been his custom of old to carry on two romances at the same time, was now too happy to encourage him in beginning *Woodstock*, to be taken up whenever the historical MS should be in advance of the press.

Of the progress, both of the novel and the history, the journal will afford us fuller and clearer details than I have been able to produce as to any of his preceding works, but before I open that sealed book, I believe it will be satisfactory to the reader that I should present (as briefly as I can) my own view of the melancholy change in Sir Walter's worldly fortunes, to which almost every page of the diary, during several sad and toilsome years, contains some allusion. So doing, I shall avoid (in some measure at least) the necessity of interrupting, by awkward explanations, the easy tenour of perhaps the most candid diary that ever man penned.

The early history of Scott's connection with the Ballantynes has been already given in abundant detail, and I have felt it my duty not to shrink, at whatever pain to my own feelings or those of others, from setting down, plainly and distinctly, my own impressions of the character, manners, and conduct of those two very dissimilar brothers. I find, without surprise, that my representations of them have not proved satisfactory to their surviving relations. That I cannot help; though I sincerely regret having been compelled, in justice to Scott, to become the instrument for opening old wounds in kind bosoms, animated, I doubt not, like my own, by veneration for his memory, and respected by me for combining that feeling with a tender concern for names so intimately connected with his throughout long years of mutual confidence. But I have been entirely mistaken if those to whom I allude, or any others of my readers, have interpreted any expressions of mine as designed to cast the slightest imputation on the moral rectitude of the elder Ballantyne. No suspicion of that nature ever crossed my mind. I believe James to have been, from first to last, a perfectly upright man, that his principles were of a lofty stamp, his feelings pure even to simplicity. His brother John had many amiable as well as amusing qualities, and I am far from wishing to charge even him with any deep or deliberate malversation. Sir Walter's own epithet of "my little picaroon" indicates all that I desired to imply on that score. But John was, from mere giddiness of head and temper, incapable of conducting any serious business advantageously, either for himself or for others, nor dare I hesitate to express my conviction that, from failings of a different sort, honest James was hardly a better manager than the picaroon.

He had received the education, not of a printer but of a solicitor, and he never, to his dying day, had the remotest knowledge or feeling of what the most important business of a master printer consists in. He had a fine taste for the effect of types—no establishment turned out more beautiful specimens of the art than his—but he appears never to have understood that types need watching as well as setting. If the page looked

handsome he was satisfied. He had been instructed that on every £50 paid in his men's wages, the master printer is entitled to an equal sum of gross profit, and beyond this *rule of thumb* calculation, no experience could bring him to penetrate his *mystery*. In a word, James never comprehended that in the greatest and most regularly employed manufactory of this kind (or indeed of any kind), the profits are likely to be entirely swallowed up, unless the acting master keeps up a most wakeful scrutiny, from week to week, and from day to day, as to the machinery and the materials. So far was he from doing this, that during several of the busiest and most important years of his connection with the establishment in the Canongate, he seldom crossed its doors. He sat in his own elbow-chair, in a comfortable library, situated in a different street, not certainly an idle man, quite the reverse, though naturally indolent, but the most negligent and inefficient of master printers.

He was busy, indeed, and inestimably serviceable to Scott was his labour, but it consisted simply and solely in the correction and revisal of proof-sheets. It is most true that Sir Walter's hurried and careless method of composition rendered it absolutely necessary that whatever he wrote should be subjected to far more than the usual amount of inspection required at the hands of the printer, and it is equally so, that it would have been extremely difficult to find another man willing and able to bestow such time and care on his proof-sheets as they uniformly received from James. But this was, in fact, not the proper occupation of the man who was at the head of the establishment, who had undertaken the pecuniary management of the concern. In every other great printing-house that I have known anything about, there are intelligent and well-educated men, called, technically, *readers*, who devote themselves to this species of labour, and who are, I fear, seldom paid in proportion to its importance. Dr Goldsmith, in his early life, was such a *reader* in the printing-house of Richardson, but the author of *Clarissa* did not disdain to look after the presses and types himself, or he would never have accumulated the fortune that enabled him to be the liberal employer of *readers* like Goldsmith. In a letter of Scott's, written when John Ballantyne and Co's bookselling house was breaking up, he says, "One or other of you will need to be constantly in the printing office *henceforth* it is the sheet-anchor." This was *ten* years after that establishment began. Thenceforth James, in compliance with this injunction, occupied, during many hours of every day, a small cabinet on the premises in the Canongate; but whoever visited him there, found him at the same eternal business, that of a literator, not that of a printer. He was either editing his newspaper—and he considered that matter as fondly and proudly as Mr Pott in *Pickwick* does his *Gazette of Eatanswill*—or correcting proof-sheets, or writing critical notes and letters to the author of *Waverley*. Shakespeare, Addison, Johnson, and Burke were at his elbow, but not the ledger. We may thus understand poor John's complaint, in what I may call his dying memorandum, of the "large sums abstracted from the bookselling house for the use of the printing office." Yet that bookselling house was from the first a hopeless one, whereas, under accurate superintendence, the other ought to have produced the partners a dividend of from £2,000 to £3,000 a year, at the very least.

On the other hand, the necessity of providing some remedy for this radical disorder, must very soon have forced itself upon the conviction of all concerned, had not John Ballantyne (who had served a brief apprenticeship in a London banking-house) introduced his fatal enlightenment on the subject of facilitating discounts, and raising cash by means of accommodation-bills. Hence the perplexed *stats* and *calendars*, the wildernesses and labyrinths of ciphers, through which no eye but that of a professed accountant could have detected any clue; hence the accumulation of bills and counter-bills drawn by both bookselling and printing-house, and gradually so mixed up with other obligations, that John Ballantyne died in utter ignorance of the condition of their affairs. The pecuniary detail of those affairs then devolved upon James, and I fancy it will be only too apparent that he never made even one serious effort to master the formidable balances of figures thus committed to his sole trust, but in which his all was not all that was involved.

I need not recapitulate the history of the connection between these Ballantyne firms and that of Constable. It was traced as accurately as my means permitted in the preceding pages, with an eye to the catastrophe. I am willing to believe that kindly feelings had no small share in inducing Constable to uphold the credit of John Ballantyne and Company in their several successive struggles to avoid the exposure of bankruptcy. He was, with pitiable foibles enough, and grievous faults, a man of warm, and therefore, I hardly doubt, of sympathizing temperament. Vain to excess, proud at the same time, haughty, arrogant, presumptuous, despotic—he had still perhaps a heart. Persons who knew him longer and better than I did, assure me of their conviction that, in spite of many direct professional hindrances and thwartings, the offspring (as *he* viewed matters) partly of Tory jealousy and partly of poetical caprice, he had, even at an early period of his life, formed a genuine affection for Scott's person, as well as a most profound veneration for his genius. I think it very possible that he began his assistance of the Ballantyne companies mainly under this generous influence, and I also believe that he had, in different ways, a friendly leaning in favour of both James and John themselves. But when he, in his overweening self-sufficiency, thought it involved no mighty hazard to indulge his better feelings, as well as his lordly vanity, in shielding these friends from commercial dishonour, he had estimated but loosely the demands of the career of speculation on which he was himself entering. And by-and-bye, when, advancing by one mighty plunge after another in that vast field, he felt in his own person the threatenings of more signal ruin than could have befallen them, this "Napoleon of the press"—still as of old buoyed up as to the ultimate result of his grand operations by the most fulsome flatteries of imagination—appears to have tossed aside very summarily all scruples about the extent to which he might be entitled to tax their sustaining credit in requital. The Ballantynes, if they had comprehended all the bearings of the case, were not the men to consider grudgingly demands of this nature, founded on service so important; and who can doubt that Scott viewed them from a chivalrous altitude? It is easy to see that the moment the obligations became reciprocal, there arose extreme peril of their coming to be hopelessly complicated. It is equally clear that he ought to have applied on

these affairs, as their complication thickened, the acumen which he exerted, and rather prided himself in exerting, on smaller points of worldly business, to the utmost. That he did not I must always regard as the enigma of his personal history, but various incidents in that history, which I have already narrated, prove incontestably that he had never done so; and I am unable to account for this having been the case, except on the supposition that his confidence in the resources of Constable and the prudence of James Ballantyne was so entire that he willingly absolved himself from all duty of active and thorough-going super-inspection.

It is the extent to which the confusion had gone that constitutes the great puzzle. I have been told that John Ballantyne, in his heyday, might be heard whistling on his clerk, John Stevenson (True Jock), from the *sanctum* behind the shop, with, "Jock, you lubber, fetch ben a sheaf o' stamps." Such things might well enough be believed of that hare-brained creature, but how sober, solemn James could have made up his mind, as he must have done, to follow much the same wild course, whenever any pinch occurred, is to me, I must own, incomprehensible. The books, of course, were kept at the printing-house, and Scott, no doubt, had it in his power to examine them as often as he liked to go there for that purpose. But did he ever descend the Canongate *once* on such an errand? I certainly much question it. I think it very likely he now and then cast a rapid glance over the details of a week's or a month's operations, but no man who has followed him throughout can dream that he ever grappled with the sum total. During several years it was almost daily my custom to walk home with Sir Walter from the Parliament House, calling at James's on our way. For the most part I used to amuse myself with a newspaper or proof-sheet in the outer room, while they were closeted in the little cabinet at the corner, and merry were the tones that reached my ear while they remained in colloquy. If I were called in, it was because James, in his ecstasy, must have another to enjoy the dialogue that his friend was improvising—between Meg Dods and Captain Mac-Turk, for example, or Peter Peebles and his counsel.

The reader may perhaps remember a page where I described Scott as riding with Johnny Ballantyne and myself round the deserted halls of the ancient family of Riddell, and remarking how much it increased the wonder of their ruin that the late baronet had "kept day-book and ledger as regularly as any *cheesemonger in the Grass-market*." It is, nevertheless, true that Sir Walter kept from first to last as accurate an account of his own *personal* expenditure as Sir John Riddell could have done of his extravagant outlay on agricultural experiments. The instructions he gave his son, when first joining the 18th Hussars, about the best method of keeping accounts, were copied from his own practice. I could, I believe, place before my reader the sum total of sixpences that it had cost him to ride through turnpike gates during a period of thirty years. This was, of course, an early habit mechanically adhered to, but how strange that the man who could persist, however mechanically, in noting down every shilling that he actually drew from his purse, should have allowed others to pledge his credit, year after year, upon sheafs of accommodation paper, "the time for paying which

up must certainly come," without keeping an efficient watch on their proceedings—without knowing any one Christmas, for how many thousands or rather tens of thousands he was responsible as a *printer in the Canongate*!

This is sufficiently astonishing, and had this been all, the result must sooner or later have been sufficiently uncomfortable, but still, in the absence of a circumstance which Sir Walter, however vigilant, could hardly have been expected to anticipate as within the range of possibility, he would have been in no danger of a "check that must throw him on the breakers"—of finding himself, after his flutterings over the Happy Valley, "in the lake." He could never have foreseen a step which Constable took in the frenzied excitement of his day of pecuniary alarm. Owing to the original habitual irregularities of John Ballantyne, it had been adopted as the regular plan between that person and Constable, that, whenever the latter signed a bill for the purpose of the others raising money among the bankers, there should, in case of his neglecting to take that bill up before it fell due, be deposited a counter-bill, signed by Ballantyne, on which Constable might, if need were, raise a sum equivalent to that for which he had pledged his credit. I am told that this is an usual enough course of procedure among speculative merchants, and it may be so. But mark the issue. The plan went on under James's management, just as John had begun it. Under his management also, such was the incredible looseness of it, the *counter-bills*, meant only for being sent into the market in the event of the *primary bills* being threatened with dishonour—these instruments of safeguard for Constable against contingent danger were allowed to lie uninqured about in Constable's desk until they had swelled to a truly monstrous "sheaf of stamps." Constable's hour of distress darkened about him, and he rushed with these to the money-changers. They were nearly all flung into circulation in the course of this maddening period of panic. And by this one circumstance it came to pass that, supposing Ballantyne and Co to have, at the day of reckoning, obligations against them, in consequence of bill transactions with Constable, to the extent of £25,000, they were legally responsible for £50,000.

It is not my business to attempt any detailed history of the house of Constable. The sanguine man had, almost at the outset of his career, been "lifted off his feet," in Burns' phrase, by the sudden and unparalleled success of the *Edinburgh Review*. Scott's poetry and Scott's novels followed, and had he confined himself to those three great and triumphant undertakings, he must have died in possession of a princely fortune. But his "appetite grew with what it fed on," and a long series of less meritorious publications, pushed on, one after the other, in the craziest rapidity, swallowed up the gains which, however vast, he never counted, and therefore always exaggerated to himself. He had with the only person who might have been supposed capable of controlling him in his later years, the authority of age and a quasi-parental relationship to sustain the natural influence of great and commanding talents, his proud temperament and his glowing imagination played into each other's hands, and he scared suspicion, or trampled remonstrance, whenever (which probably was seldom) he failed to infuse the fervour of his own

self-confidence But even his gross imprudence in the management of his own great business would not have been enough to involve him in absolute ruin had the matter halted there, and had he, suspending, as he meant to do, all minor operations, concentrated his energies in alliance with Scott upon the new and dazzling adventure of the cheap Miscellany, I have no doubt the damage of early misreckonings would soon have been altogether obliterated But what he had been to the Ballantynes, certain other still more audacious "Sheafmen" had been to him The house of Hurst, Robinson, and Co had long been his London agents and correspondents, and he had carried on with them the same traffic in bills and counter-bills that the Canongate company did with him—and upon a still larger scale They had done what he did not—or at least did not to any very culpable extent they had carried their adventures out of the line of their own business It was they, for example, that must needs be embarking such vast sums in a speculation on hops When ruin threatened them, they availed themselves of Constable's credit without stint or limit, while he, feeling darkly that the net was around him, struggled and splashed for relief, no matter who might suffer, so he escaped And Sir Walter Scott, sorely as he suffered, was too painfully conscious of the "strong tricks" he had allowed his own imagination to play, not to make merciful allowance for all the apparently monstrous things that I have now been narrating of Constable, though an offence lay behind which even his charity could not forgive Of that I need not as yet speak I have done all that seems to me necessary for enabling the reader to apprehend the nature and extent of the pecuniary difficulties in which Scott was about to be involved, when he commenced his *Diary of 1825*

For the rest, his friends, and above all posterity, are not left to consider his fate without consoling reflections They who knew and loved him must ever remember that the real nobility of his character could not have exhibited itself to the world at large, had he not been exposed in his later years to the ordeal of adversity And others as well as they may feel assured, that had not that adversity been preceded by the perpetual spur of pecuniary demands, he who began life with such quick appetites for all its ordinary enjoyments, would never have devoted himself to the rearing of that gigantic monument of genius, labour, and power, which his works now constitute The imagination which has bequeathed so much to delight and humanize mankind, would have developed few of its uncurious resources, except in the embellishment of his own personal existence. The enchanted spring might have sunk into earth with the rod that bade it gush, and left us no living waters We cannot understand, but we may nevertheless respect even the strangest caprices of the marvellous combination of faculties to which our debt is so weighty We should try to picture to ourselves what the actual intellectual life must have been of the author of such a series of romances We should ask ourselves whether, filling and discharging so soberly and gracefully as he did the common functions of social man, it was not, nevertheless, impossible but that he must have passed most of his life in other worlds than ours, and we ought hardly to think it a grievous circumstance that their bright visions should have left a dazzle sometimes on the eyes which

he so gently re-opened upon our prosaic realities. He had, on the whole, a command over the powers of his mind—I mean that he could control and direct his thoughts and reflections with a readiness, firmness, and easy security of sway—beyond what I find it possible to trace in any other *artist's* recorded character and history, but he could not habitually fling them into the region of dreams throughout a long series of years, and yet be expected to find a corresponding satisfaction in bending them to the less agreeable considerations which the circumstances of any human being's practical lot in this world must present in abundance. The training to which he accustomed himself could not leave him as he was when he began. He must pay the penalty as well as reap the glory of this lifelong abstraction of reverie, this self-abandonment of Fairyland.

This was for him the last year of many things, among others, of *Sibyl Gray* and *the Abbotsford Hunt*. Towards the close of a hard run on his neighbour Mr Scott of Gala's ground, he ventured to leap *the Catrail*—that venerable relic of the days of

“Reged wide
And fair Strath Clyde”

He was severely bruised and shattered, and never afterwards recovered the feeling of confidence without which there can be no pleasure in horsemanship. He often talked of this accident with a somewhat superstitious mournfulness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SCOTT'S DIARY BEGUN—BONNIE DUNDEE WRITTEN—CATASTROPHE OF THE THREE HOUSES OF PUBLISHERS—RESULT

THE Journal, on which we are about to enter, has on the title-page, "Sir Walter Scott of Abbotsford, Bart., his Gurnal,"—and this footnote to *Gurnal*, "A hard word, so spelt on the authority of Miss Sophia Scott, now Mrs Lockhart." This is a little joke, alluding to a note-book kept by his eldest girl during one of the Highland expeditions of earlier days, in which he was accompanied by his wife and children. The motto is,—

"As I walked by myself,
I talked to myself,
And thus myself said to me"—*Old song*

These lines are quoted also in his review of Pepys' Diary. That book was published just before he left Edinburgh in July. It was, I believe, the only one he took with him to Ireland, and I never observed him more delighted with any book whatsoever. He had ever afterwards many of its queer turns and phrases on his lips

DIARY.

"*Edinburgh, November 20, 1825*—I have all my life regretted that I did not keep a regular journal. I have myself lost recollection of much that was interesting, and I have deprived my family of some curious information, by not carrying this resolution into effect. I have bethought me, on seeing lately some volumes of Byron's notes, that he probably had hit upon the right way of keeping such a memorandum-book, by throwing out all pretence to regularity and order, and marking down events just as they occurred to recollection. I will try this plan, and behold I have a handsome locked volume, such as might serve for a lady's album. *Nota bene*, John Lockhart, and Anne, and I are to raise a Society for the Suppression of Albums. It is a most troublesome shape of mendicancy. Sir, your autograph—a line of poetry—or a prose sentence! Among all the sprawling sonnets and blotted trumpery that dishonours these miscellanies, a man must have a good stomach that can swallow this botheration as a compliment.

"I was in Ireland last summer, and had a most delightful tour. There is much less of exaggeration about the Irish than might have been suspected. Their poverty is not exaggerated, it is on the extreme verge of human misery, their cottages would scarce serve for pig-styes, even in Scotland, and their rags seem the very refuse of a rag-shop, and are disposed on their bodies with such ingenious variety of wretchedness that

you would think nothing but some sort of perverted taste could have assembled so many shreds together. You are constantly fearful that some knot or loop will give, and place the individual before you in all the primitive simplicity of Paradise. Then for their food, they have only potatoes, and too few of them. Yet the men look stout and healthy, the women buxom and well coloured.

"*November 21, 1825*—I am enamoured of my journal. I wish the zeal may but last. Once more of Ireland. I said their poverty was not exaggerated, neither is their wit, nor their good humour, nor their whimsical absurdity, nor their courage. *Wit*—I gave a fellow a shilling on some occasion when sixpence was the fee. 'Remember you owe me sixpence, Pat.' 'May your honour live till I pay you.' There was courtesy as well as art in this, and all the clothes on Pat's back would have been dearly bought by the sum in question.

"*Good humour*—There is perpetual kindness in the Irish cabin—buttermilk, potatoes, a stool is offered, or a stone is rolled that your honour may sit down and be out of the smoke, and those who beg everywhere else seem desirous to exercise free hospitality in their own houses. Their natural disposition is turned to gaiety and happiness. While a Scotchman is thinking about the term-day, or, if easy on that subject, about hell in the next world—while an Englishman is making a little hell in the present, because his muffin is not well roasted—Pat's mind is always turned to fun and ridicule. They are terribly excitable, to be sure, and will murder you on slight suspicion, and find out next day that it was all a mistake, and that it was not yourself they meant to kill at all, at all.

"*Absurdity*—They were widening the road near Lord Claremont's seat as we passed. A number of cars were drawn up together at a particular point, where we also halted, as we understood they were blowing a rock, and the *shot* was expected presently to go off. After waiting two minutes or so a fellow called out something, and our carriage as a planet, and the cars for satellites, started all forward at once, the Irishmen whooping and the horses galloping. Unable to learn the meaning of this, I was only left to suppose that they had delayed firing the intended *shot* till we should pass, and that we were passing quickly to make the delay as short as possible. No such thing. By dint of making great haste we got within ten yards of the rock just when the blast took place, throwing dust and gravel on our carriage, and had our postillion brought us a little nearer (it was not for want of hallooing and flogging that he did not), we should have had a still more serious share of the explosion. The explanation I received from the drivers was that they had been told by the overseer that as the mine had been so long in going off, he dared say we would have time to pass it—so we just waited long enough to make the danger imminent. I have only to add that two or three people got behind the carriage, just for nothing but to see how our honours got past. * * * *

"Dined with Sir Robert Dundas, where we met Lord and Lady Melville. My little *nieces* (*ex officio*) gave us some pretty music. I do not know and cannot utter a note of music, and complicated harmonies seem to me a babble of confused though pleasing sounds. Yet simple melodies,

especially if connected with words and ideas, have as much effect on me as on most people. But then I hate to hear a young person sing without feeling and expression suited to the song. I cannot bear a voice that has no more life in it than a pianoforte or a bugle-horn. There is about all the fine arts a something of soul and spirit, which, like the vital principle in man, defies the research of the most critical anatomist. You feel where it is not, yet you cannot describe what it is you want. Sir Joshua, or some other great painter, was looking at a picture on which much pains had been bestowed. 'Why, yes,' he said, in a hesitating manner, 'it is very clever—very well done—can't find fault, but it wants something, it wants—it wants—d—n me, it wants THAT' throwing his hand over his head and snapping his fingers. Tom Moore's is the most exquisite warbling I ever heard. Next to him, David Macculloch for Scotch songs. The last, when a boy at Dumfries, was much admired by Burns, who used to get him to try over the words which he composed to new melodies. He is brother to Macculloch of Ardwell.

"November 22 Moore—I saw Moore (for the first time, I may say) this season. We had indeed met in public twenty years ago. There is a manly frankness, with perfect ease and good-breeding, about him which is delightful. Not the least touch of the poet or the pedant. A little—very little man. Less, I think, than Lewis, and somewhat like him in person, God knows, not in conversation, for Matt, though a clever fellow, was a bore of the first description. Moreover, he looked always like a schoolboy. Now Moore has none of this insignificance. His countenance is plain, but the expression so very animated, especially in speaking or singing, that it is far more interesting than the finest features could have rendered it.

"I was aware that Byron had often spoken, both in private society and in his journal, of Moore and myself, in the same breath, and with the same sort of regard, so I was curious to see what there could be in common between us, Moore having lived so much in the gay world, I in the country, and with people of business, and sometimes with politicians, Moore a scholar, I none, he a musician and artist, I without knowledge of a note, he a democrat, I an aristocrat, with many other points of difference, besides his being an Irishman, I a Scotchman, and both tolerably national. Yet there is a point of resemblance, and a strong one. We are both good-humoured fellows, who rather seek to enjoy what is going forward than to maintain our dignity as Lions, and we have both seen the world too widely and too well not to condemn in our souls the imaginary consequence of literary people, who walk with their noses in the air, and remind me always of the fellow whom Johnson met in an alchouse, and who called himself '*the great Twalmly, inventor of the flood-gate iron for smoothing linen*'. He also enjoys the *mot pour rire*, and so do I. It was a pity that nothing save the total destruction of Byron's Memoirs would satisfy his executors. But there was a reason—*Premat Nox alta*. It would be a delightful addition to life, if T. M. had a cottage within two miles of one. We went to the theatre together, and the house being luckily a good one, received T. M. with rapture. I could have hugged them, for it paid back the debt of the kind reception I met with in Ireland.

"Here is matter for a May morning, but much fitter for a November one. The general distress in the city has affected H and R, Constable's great agents. Should they go, it is not likely that Constable can stand, and such an event would lead to great distress and perplexity on the part of J B and myself. Thank God I have enough to pay more than 20s in the pound, taking matters at the very worst. But much inconvenience must be the consequence. I had a lesson in 1814 which should have done good, but success and abundance erased it from my mind. But this is no time for journalizing or moralizing either. Necessity is like a sour-faced cookmaid, and I a turnspit she has flogged, ere now, till he mounted his wheel. If Woodstock can be out by 25th January it will do much, and it is possible. Could not write to purpose for thick-coming fancies.

"My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, sir,
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Employs a't my hand, sir."

"Went to dine at the Lord Justice-Clerk's, as I thought by invitation, but it was for Tuesday se'ennight. Returned very well pleased, not being exactly in the humour for company, and had a beef-steak. My appetite is surely, excepting as to quantity, that of a farmer, for, eating moderately of anything, my epicurean pleasure is in the most simple diet. Wine I seldom taste when alone, and use instead a little spirits and water. I have of late diminished the quantity. I smoke a couple of cigars instead, which operates equally as a sedative—

"Just to drive the cold winter away,
And drown the fatigues of the day."

"I smoked a good deal about twenty years ago when at Ashiestiel, but coming down one morning to the parlour, I found, as the room was small and confined, that the smell was unpleasant, and laid aside the use of the *Nicotian weed* for many years, but was again led to use it by the example of my son, a hussar officer, and my son-in-law, an Oxford student. I could lay it aside to-morrow, I laugh at the dominion of custom in this and many things.

"We make the giants first, and then—*do not* kill them."

"November 23.—On comparing notes with Moore, I was confirmed in one or two points which I had always laid down in considering poor Byron. One was, that, like Rousseau, he was apt to be very suspicious and a plain downright steadiness of manner was the true mode to maintain his good opinion. Will Rose told me that once, while sitting with Byron, he fixed insensibly his eyes on his feet, one of which, it must be remembered, was deformed. Looking up suddenly, he saw Byron regarding him with a look of concentrated and deep displeasure, which wore off when he observed no consciousness or embarrassment in the countenance of Rose. Murray afterwards explained this by telling Rose that Lord Byron was very jealous of having this personal imperfection noticed or attended to. In another point, Moore confirmed my previous opinion, namely, that Byron loved mischief-making. Moore had written to him, cautioning him against the project of establishing the paper called

the Liberal, in communion with men on whom he said the world had set its mark. Byron showed this to the parties Shelley wrote a modest and rather affecting expostulation to Moore. These two peculiarities of extreme suspicion and love of mischief are both shades of the malady which certainly tinctured some part of the character of this mighty genius; and without some tendency towards which, genius perhaps cannot exist to great extent. The wheels of a machine to play rapidly must not fit with the utmost exactness, else the attrition diminishes the impetus.

"Another of Byron's peculiarities was the love of mystifying, which, indeed, may be referred to that of mischief. There was no knowing how much or how little to believe of his narratives. Instance — William Bankes expostulating with him upon a dedication which he had written in extravagant terms of praise to Cam Hobhouse, Byron told him that Cam had bored him about this dedication till he had said, 'Well, it shall be so, provided you will write it yourself,' and affirmed that Hobhouse did write the high-coloured dedication accordingly. I mentioned this to Murray, having the report from Will Rose, to whom Bankes had mentioned it. Murray, in reply, assured me that the dedication was written by Lord Byron himself, and showed it me in his own hand. I wrote to Rose to mention the thing to Bankes, as it might have made mischief had the story got into the circle. Byron was disposed to think all men of imagination were addicted to mix fiction (or poetry) in their prose. * * * * He loved to be thought woeful, mysterious, and gloomy, and sometimes hinted at strange causes. I believe the whole to have been the creation and sport of a wild and powerful fancy. In the same manner he *crammed* people, as it is termed, about duels and the like, which never existed, or were much exaggerated.

"What I liked about Byron, besides his boundless genius, was his generosity of spirit as well as purse, and his utter contempt of all the affectations of literature, from the school-magisterial style to the luckadaisical. His example has formed a sort of upper house of poetry, — but

"There will be many peers
T'ro such another Byron."

"* * * * Talking of Abbotsford, it begins to be haunted by too much company of every kind, but especially foreigners. I do not like them. I hate fine waistcoats, and breast-pins upon dirty shirts. I detest the impudence that pays a stranger compliments, and harangues about an author's works in his own house, which is surely ill breeding. Moreover, they are seldom long of making it evident that they know nothing about what they are talking of, excepting having seen the *Lady of the Lake* at the opera.

"November 24th — Talking of strangers, London held, some four or five years since, one of those animals who are lions at first, but by transmutation of two seasons become in regular course *bores* — Ugo Foscolo by name, a haunter of Murray's shop and of literary parties. Ugly as a baboon, and intolerably conceited, he spluttered, blustered, and disputed, without even knowing the principles upon which men of sense render a reason, and screamed all the while like a pig with a knife in his throat. Another such animalaccio is a brute of a Marquis de * * *, who lately

inflicted two days on us at Abbotsford. These gentry never know what to make of themselves in the forenoon, but sit tormenting the women to play at proverbs and such trash.

"November 28—People make me the oddest requests. It is not unusual for an Oxonian or Cantab, who has outrun his allowance, and of whom I know nothing, to apply to me for the loan of £20, £50, or £100. A captain of the Danish naval service writes to me, that being in distress for a sum of money by which he might transport himself to Columbia to offer his services in assisting to free that province, he had dreamed I generously made him a present of it. I can tell him his dream by contraries. I begin to find, like Joseph Surface, that too good a character is inconvenient. I don't know what I have done to gain so much credit for generosity, but I suspect I owe it to being supposed, as Puff says, one of 'those whom Heaven has blessed with affluence.' Not too much of that neither, my dear petitioners, though I may thank myself that your ideas are not correct.

"November 30—I am come to the time when 'those that look out of the windows shall be darkened.' I must now wear spectacles constantly in reading and writing, though till this winter I have made a shift by using only their occasional assistance. Although my health cannot be better, I feel my lameness becomes sometimes painful, and often inconvenient. Walking on the pavement or causeway gives me trouble, and I am glad when I have accomplished my return on foot from the Parliament House to Castle Street, though I can (taking a competent time, as old Braxie said on another occasion) walk five or six miles in the country with pleasure. Well, such things must come, and be received with cheerful submission. My early lameness considered, it was impossible for a man to have been stronger or more active than I have been, and that for twenty or thirty years. Seams will slit, and elbows will out, quoth the tailor, and as I was fifty-four 15th August last, my mental vestments are none of the newest. Then Walter, Charles, and Lockhart are as active and handsome young fellows as you can see, and while they enjoy strength and activity I can hardly be said to want it. I have perhaps all my life set an undue value on these gifts. Yet it does appear to me that high and independent feelings are naturally, though not uniformly or inseparably, connected with bodily advantages. Strong men are usually good-humoured, and active men often display the same elasticity of mind as of body. These superiorities, indeed, are often misused. But even for these things God shall call us to judgment.

"December 7th—Teind day—at home, of course. Wrote answers to one or two letters which have been lying on my desk like snakes, hissing at me for my dilatoriness. Received a letter from Sir W. Knighton, mentioning that the King acquiesced in my proposal that Constable's Miscellany should be dedicated to him. Enjoined, however, not to make this public till the draft of dedication shall be approved. This letter tarried so long I thought some one had insinuated the proposal was *infra dig*. I don't think so. The purpose is to bring all the standard works, both in sciences and the liberal arts, within the reach of the lower classes, and enable them thus to use with advantage the education which is given them at every hand. To make boys learn to read, and then place no

good books within their reach, is to give men an appetite and leave nothing in the pantry save unwholesome and poisonous food, which, depend upon it, they will eat rather than starve Sir William, it seems, had been in Germany

"Mighty dark this morning. it is past ten and I am using my lamp. The vast number of houses built beneath us to the north certainly renders our street darker during the days in which frost or haze prevents the smoke from rising. After all it may be my older eyes I remember two years ago, when Lord Hermand began to fail somewhat in his limbs, he observed that Lord Smeeth came to Court at a more early hour than usual, whereas it was he himself who took longer time to walk the usual distance betwixt his house and the Parliament Square. I suspect old gentlemen often make these mistakes.

"Dined quiet with Lady S—— and Anne Anne is practising Scots songs, which I take as a kind compliment to my own taste, as hers leads her chiefly to foreign music I think the good girl sees that I want and must miss her sister's peculiar talent in singing the airs of our native country, which, imperfect as my musical ear is, make, and always have made, the most pleasing impression on me And so if she puts a constraint on herself for my sake, I can only say, in requital, God bless her.

"I have much to comfort me in the present aspect of my family. My eldest son, independent in fortune, united to an affectionate wife, and of good hopes in his profession, my second, with a good deal of talent, and in the way, I trust, of cultivating it to good purpose Anne, an honest, downright, good Scots lass, in whom I could only wish to correct a spirit of satire, and Lockhart is Lockhart, to whom I can most willingly confide the happiness of the daughter who chose him, and whom he has chosen But my dear wife, the partner of early cares and successes, is, I fear, frail in health, though I trust and pray she may see me out. Indeed, if this troublesome complaint goes on, it bodes no long existence Good night, Sir Walter, about sixty—I care not, if I leave my name unstained, and my family properly settled—*Sat est iussu*

"There is nothing more awful than to attempt to cast a glance among the clouds and mists which hide the broken extremity of the celebrated bridge of Mirza.* Yet, when every day brings us nigher that termination, one would almost think our views should become clearer Alas! it is not so there is a curtain to be withdrawn, a veil to be rent, before we shall see things as they really are There are few, I trust, who disbelieve the existence of a God; nay, I doubt if at all times and in all moods any single individual ever adopted that hideous creed, though some have professed it With the belief of a Deity, that of the immortality of the soul and of the state of future rewards and punishments is indissolubly linked More we are not to know, but neither are we prohibited from all attempts, however vain, to pierce the solemn sacred gloom. The expressions used in Scripture are doubtless metaphorical, for penal fires and heavenly melody are only applicable to beings endowed with corporeal senses; and at least till the period of the resurrection, the spirits of men, whether entering into the perfection of the just, or committed to the regions of punishment, are not connected with

* Spectator, No 159.

bodies Neither is it to be supposed that the glorified bodies which shall arise in the last day will be capable of the same gross indulgences with which ours are now solaced That the idea of Mahomet's Paradise is inconsistent with the purity of our heavenly religion will be readily granted, and see Mark xii 25 Harmony is obviously chosen as the least corporeal of all gratifications of the sense, and as the type of love, unity, and a state of peace and perfect happiness But they have a poor idea of the Deity, and the rewards which are destined for the just made perfect, who can only adopt the literal sense of an eternal concert—a never-ending birthday ode I rather suppose this should be understood as some commission from the Highest, some duty to discharge with the applause of a satisfied conscience That the Deity, who Himself must be supposed to feel love and affection for the beings He has called into existence, should delegate a portion of those powers, I for one cannot conceive altogether so wrong a conjecture We would then find reality in Milton's sublime machinery of the guardian saints or genui of kingdoms Nay, we would approach to the Catholic idea of the employment of saints, though without approaching the absurdity of saint-worship, which degrades their religion There would be, we must suppose, in these employments difficulties to overcome and exertions to be made, for all which the celestial beings employed would have certain appropriate powers I cannot help owning that a life of active benevolence is more consistent with my ideas than an eternity of music But it is all speculation, and it is impossible to guess what we shall do, unless we could ascertain the equally difficult previous question, what we are to be But there is a God, and a just God—a judgment and a future life—and all who own so much, let them act according to the faith that is in them I would not, of course, limit the range of my genui to this confined earth. There is the universe with all its endless extent of worlds

“December 11 —A touch of the *morbus eruditorum*, to which I am as little subject as most folks, and have it less now than when young It is a tremor of the head, the pulsation of which becomes painfully sensible, a disposition to causeless alarm, much lassitude, and decay of vigour and activity of intellect. The reins feel weary and painful, and the mind is apt to receive and encourage gloomy apprehensions Fighting with this fiend is not always the best way to conquer him. I have found exercise and the open air better than reasoning But such weather as is now without doors does not encourage *la petite guerre*, so we must give him battle in form, by letting both mind and body know that, supposing one the House of Commons and the other the House of Peers, my will is sovereign over both There is a fine description of this species of mental weakness in the fine play of Beaumont and Fletcher, called the Lover's Progress, where the man, warned that his death is approaching works himself into an agony of fear, and calls for assistance, though there is no apparent danger The apparition of the innkeeper's ghost in the same play hovers between the ludicrous and the terrible; and to me the touches of the former quality which it contains seem to augment the effect of the latter, they seem to give reality to the supernatural, as being a circumstance with which an inventor would hardly have garished his story.

'December 12 — Hogg came to breakfast this morning, and brought for his companion the Galashiel's bard, David Thomson, as to a meeting of *huz Trindale poets* The honest grunter opines with a delightful *naivete* that *Muir's* verses are far owre sweet, answered by Thomson that Moore's ear or notes, I forget which, were finely strung 'They are far owre finely strung,' replied he of the Forest, 'for mine are just right' It reminded me of Queen Bess, when questioning Melville sharply and closely whether Mary was taller than her, and extracting an answer in the affirmative, she replied, 'Then your Queen is too tall, for I am just the proper height'

"An odd optical delusion has amused me these two last nights I have been of late, for the first time, condemned to the constant use of spectacles. Now, when I have laid them aside to step into a room dimly lighted out of the strong light which I use for writing, I have seen, or seemed to see, through the rim of the same spectacles which I have left behind me At first the impression was so lively that I put my hands to my eyes, believing I had the actual spectacles on at the moment But what I saw was only the eidolon or image of said useful servants This fortifies some of Dr. Hibbert's positions about spectral appearances.

"December 13 — Letter from Lady Stafford — kind and friendly after the wont of *Banzu-Mohr-ar-chat* This is wrong-spelled, I know Her countenance is something for Sophia, whose company should be as ladies are said to choose their liquor—little and good To be acquainted with persons of mere *ton* is a nuisance and a scrape, to be known to persons of real fashion and fortune is in London a very great advantage In London second-rate fashion is like false jewels

"December 14 — Affairs very bad again in the money market in London It must come here, and I have far too many engagements not to feel it To end the matter at once, I intend to borrow £10,000, with which my son's marriage contract allows me to charge my estate. This will enable us to dispense in a great measure with bank assistance, and sleep in spite of thunder I do not know why it is, this business makes me a little bilious, or rather the want of exercise during the Session, and this late change of the weather to too much heat But the sun and moon shall dance on the green ere carelessness, or hope of gain, or facility of getting cash shall make me go too deep again, were it but for the disquiet of the thing

"December 15 — Dined at home with family. I am determined not to stand mine host to all Scotland and England as I have done This shall be a saving, as it must be a borrowing year We heard from Sophia. they are got safe to town, but as Johnnie had a little bag of meal with him to make his porridge on the road, the whole inn-yard assembled to see the operation. Junior, his maid, was of opinion that England was an 'awfu' country to make parritch in.' God bless the poor baby, and restore his perfect health'

"December 18 — Poor T S called again yesterday. Through his incoherent, miserable tale, I could see that he had exhausted each access to credit, and yet fondly imagines that, bereft of all his accustomed indulgences, he can work with a literary zeal unknown to his happier days I hope he may labour enough to gain the mere support of his family. For

myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith ' be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scours, and purchasing such wastes, replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

“ ‘Fountain heads and pathless groves ;
Places which pale passion loves ’

“This cannot be, but I may work substantial husbandry, *i.e.*, write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm, at least, I much doubt the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation.

“ ‘While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,
The high mettled racer’s a hack on the road ’

“It is a bitter thought, but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

“What a life mine has been!—half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself, stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time, getting forward, and held a bold and clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer, broken-hearted for two years, my heart handsomely pieced again, but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times, once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come), because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows, and so ends the catechism.

“Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest? How live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy—the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog be-

cause it has been mine I must end these gloomy forebodings or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress I feel my dogs' feet on my knees I hear them whining and seeking me everywhere This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me—When I die will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford and read with wonder, that the well-seeming baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—'pity he took that foolish title' Who can answer this question?

"Poor Will Laidlaw—poor Tom Purdie—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow besides to whom my prosperity was daily bread

"Ballantyne behaves like himself, and sinks the prospect of his own ruin in contemplating mine I tried to enrich him, indeed, and now all, all is in the balance He will have the journal still, that is a comfort, for sure they cannot find a better editor *They*—alas! who will *they* be?—the *unbekannten obern** who may have to dispose of my all as they will? Some hard-eyed banker—some of these men of millions whom I described

"I have endeavoured to give vent to thoughts naturally so painful by writing these notes—partly to keep them at bay by busying myself with the history of the French Convention I thank God I can do both with reasonable composure I wonder how Anne will bear such an affliction. She is passionate, but stout-hearted and courageous in important matters, though irritable in trifles I am glad Lockhart and his wife are gone Why? I cannot tell—but I am pleased to be left to my own regrets, without being melted by condolences, though of the most sincere and affectionate kind

"Oddly enough, it happened mine honest friend Hector Macdonald came in before dinner, to ask a copy of my seal of arms, with a sly kindness of intimation that it was for some agreeable purpose *Half-past eight* I closed this book under the impression of impending ruin I open it an hour after (thanks be to God) with the strong hope that matters will be got over safely and honourably in a mercantile sense Cadell came at eight to communicate a letter from Hurst and Robinson, intimating they had stood the storm

"I shall always think the better of Cadell for this—not merely because his feet are beautiful on the mountains who brings good tidings, but because he showed feeling—deep feeling, poor fellow He, who I thought had no more than his numeration-table, and who, if he had had his whole counting-house full of sensibility, had yet his wife and children to bestow it upon—I will not forget this, if all keeps right I love the virtues of rough-and-round men—the others are apt to escape in salt rheum, salvolatile, and a white pocket-handkerchief

* *Unbekannten obern*—unknown rulers.

"December 19 —Ballantyne here before breakfast He looks on last night's news with confidence. Constable came in and sat an hour. The old gentleman is firm as a rock He talks of going to London next week But I must go to work.

"The air of *Bonnie Dundee* running in my head to-day, I wrote a few verses to it before dinner, taking the key-note from the story of Clavers leaving the Scottish Convention of Estates in 1688-9* I wonder if they are good? Ah, poor Will Erskine! thou couldst and wouldst have told me I must consult J B, who is as honest as was W. E. But then, though he has good taste too, there is a little of *Big Bow-wow* about it. Can't say what made me take a frisk so uncommon of late years as to write verses of free will I suppose the same impulse which makes birds sing when the storm has blown over

"December 24 —Wrote to Walter and Jane, and gave the former an account of how things had been in the money market. Constable has a new scheme of publishing the works of the author of *Waverley* in a superior style, at £1 1s volume He says he will answer for making £20,000 of this, and liberally offered me any share of the profits I have no great claim to any, as I have only to contribute the notes, which are light work, yet a few thousands coming in will be a good thing—besides the printing office Constable, though valetudinary, and cross with his partner, is certainly as good a pilot in these rough seas as ever man put faith in. His rally has put me in mind of the old song—

"The tailor raise and shook his duds,
He gar'd the BILLS flee aff in cluds,
And they that staid gat fearfu' thuds—
The tailor proved a man, O'

"We are for Abbotsford to-day, with a light heart

"December 25, *Abbotsford*. —Arrived here last night at seven Our halls are silent compared to last year, but let us be thankful—*Barbarus has segetes? Nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia* There shall be no lack of wisdom But come—*à fait cultiver notre jardin.*† Let us see, I shall write out the Bonnets of *Bonnie Dundee*. I will sketch a preface to *La Rochejacquelin* for Constable's *Miscellany*, and try about a specimen of notes for the *Waverley Novels*. Together with letters and by-business, it will be a good day's work.

"I make a vow,
And keep it true."

"I will accept no invitation for dinner, save one to Newton-Don, and Mertoun to-morrow, instead of Christmas Day. On this day of general devotion I have a particular call for gratitude!"

It was not till nearly three weeks after Sir Walter penned the last-quoted paragraph of his Diary, that Mr Constable made his appearance in London I saw him immediately Having deferred his journey imprudently, he had performed it very rapidly, and this exertion, with mental excitement, had brought on a sharp access of gout, which confined

* See Scott's Poetical Works † See *Candide*.

Lim for a couple of days to his hotel in the Adelphi—*reluctantem draconem*. A more impatient spirit never boiled in a feverish frame. It was then that I, for the first time, saw full swing given to the tyrannical temper of the *Czar*. He looked, spoke, and gesticulated like some hoary despot, accustomed to nothing but the complete indulgence of every wish and whim, against whose sovereign authority his most trusted satraps and tributaries had suddenly revolted; open rebellion in twenty provinces, confusion in the capital; treason in the palace. I will not repeat his haughty ravings of scorn and wrath. I listened to these with wonder and commiseration, nor were such feelings mitigated when, having exhausted his violence of vituperation against many persons of whom I had never before heard him speak but as able and trusted friends, he cooled down sufficiently to answer my question as to the practical business on which the note announcing his arrival in town had signified his urgent desire to take my advice. Constable told me that he had already seen one of the Hurst and Robinson firm, and that the storm which had seemed to be "blown over" had, he was satisfied, only been lulled for a moment, to burst out in redoubled fury. If they went, however, he must follow. He had determined to support them through the coming gale as he had done through the last, and he had the means to do so effectually, provided Sir Walter Scott would stand by him heartily and boldly.

The first and most obvious step was to make large sales of copyrights; and it was not surprising that Constable should have formed most extravagant notions of the marketable value of the property of this nature in his possession. Every bookseller is very apt to do so. A manuscript is submitted to him; he inspects it with coldness and suspicion, with hesitation offers a sum for it, obtains it, and sends it to be printed. He has hardly courage to look at the sheets as they are thrown off, but the book is at last laid on his counter, and he from that moment regards it with an eye of parental fondness. It is *his*, he considers it in that light quite as much as does the author, and is likely to be at least as sorely provoked by anything in the shape of hostile criticism. If this be the usual working of self-love or self-interest in such cases, what wonder that the man who had at his disposal (to say nothing of innumerable minor properties) the copyrights of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, with its Supplement, a moiety of the *Edinburgh Review*, nearly all Scott's poetry, the *Waverley Novels*, and the advancing *Life of Napoleon*—who had made, besides, sundry contracts for novels by Scott, as yet unwritten, and who seriously viewed his plan of the new *Miscellany* as in itself the sure foundation of a gigantic fortune; what wonder that the sanguine Constable should have laid to his soul the flattering unction that he had only to display such resources in some quarter totally above the momentary pressure of *the trade*, and command an advance of capital adequate to relieve him and all his allies from these unfortunate difficulties about a few paltry "sheafs" of stamped paper? To be brief, he requested me to accompany him, as soon as he could get into his carriage, to the Bank of England, and support him (as a confidential friend of the *Author of Waverley*) in his application for a loan of from £100,000 to £200,000 on the security of the copyrights in his possession. It is needless to say that, without distinct instructions from Sir Walter, I could not take upon me

to interfere in such a business as this Constable, when I refused, became livid with rage. After a long silence, he stamped on the ground, and swore that he could and would do alone. I left him in stern indignation.

There was another scene of the same kind a day or two afterwards, when his object was to get me to back his application to Sir Walter to borrow £20,000 in Edinburgh, and transmit it to him in London. I promised nothing but to acquaint Scott immediately with his request, and him with Scott's answer. Sir Walter had, ere the message reached him, been made aware that his advances had already been continued in the absence of all ground for rational hope.

It is no business of mine to detail Constable's subsequent proceedings on this his last visit to London. Everywhere he found distrust. The metropolitan bankers had enough on their hands at a time when, as Mr. Huskisson afterwards confessed in Parliament, the Bank of England itself had been on the verge of a stoppage, without embarrassing themselves with new securities of the uncertain and precarious nature of literary property. The great bookselling houses were all either labouring themselves, or watching with fear and trembling the daily aggravated symptoms of distress among their friends and connexions. Constable lingered on, fluctuating between wild hope and savage despair, until, I seriously believe, he at last hovered on the brink of insanity. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to confront creditors whom he knew he could not pay. Before that day came, I had necessarily been informed of the nature of Scott's connection with commercial speculations; but I had not been prepared for the amount to which Constable's ruin must involve him, until the final blow was struck.

I believe I have now said enough by way of preface to Sir Walter's Diary from Christmas, 1825, to the latter part of January, 1826, when my darkest anticipations were more than realized. But before I return to this Diary, it may be well to transcribe the very short passage of James Ballantyne's death-bed memorandum which refers to this painful period. Mr. Ballantyne says in that most candid paper —

"I need not here enlarge upon the unfortunate facility which, at the period of universal confidence and indulgence, our and other houses received from the banks. Suffice it to say that all our appearances of prosperity, as well as those of Constable, and Hurst and Robinson, were merely shadows, and that from the moment the bankers exhibited symptoms of doubt, it might have been easy to discover what must be the ultimate result. During weeks, and even months, however, our house was kept in a state of very painful suspense. The other two, I have no doubt, saw the coming events more clearly. I must here say that it was one of Sir Walter's weaknesses to shrink too much from looking evil in the face, and that he was apt to carry a great deal too far 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' I do not think it was more than three weeks before the catastrophe that he became fully convinced it was impending, if indeed his feelings ever reached the length of conviction at all. Thus, at the last, his fortitude was very severely tried indeed."

"January 5 — Got the desired accommodation which will put J. B. quite straight, but am a little anxious still about Constable. He has

immense stock, to be sure, and most valuable, but he may have sacrifices to make to convert a large proportion of it into ready money. The accounts from London are most disastrous. Many wealthy persons totally ruined, and many, many more have been obliged to purchase their safety at a price they will feel all their lives. I do not hear things have been so bad in Edinburgh, and J B's business has been transacted by the banks with liberality.

"Colonel Russell told us last night that the last of the Moguls, a descendant of Kubla-Khan, though having no more power than his effigies at the back of a set of playing-cards, refused to meet Lord Hastings, because the Governor-General would not agree to remain standing in his presence. Pretty well for the blood of Timur in these degenerate days."

"Much alarmed. I had walked till twelve with Skene and Russell, and then sat down to my work. To my horror and surprise I could neither write nor spell, but put down one word for another, and wrote nonsense. I was much overpowered at the same time, and could not conceive the reason. I fell asleep, however, in my chair, and slept for two hours. On my waking my head was clearer, and I began to recollect that last night I had taken the anodyne left for the purpose by Clarkson, and, being disturbed in the course of the night, I had not slept it off. Obligated to give up writing to-day—read Pepys instead."

"January 6—This seems to be a feeding storm, coming on by little and little. Wrought all day, and dined quiet. My disorder is wearing off, and the quiet society of the Skenes suits my present humour. I really thought I was in for some very bad illness. Curious expression of an Indian-born boy just come from Bengal, a son of my cousin George Swinton. The child saw a hare run across the fields, and exclaimed, 'See, there is a little tiger!'"

"January 14—An odd mysterious letter from Constable, who has gone post to London. It strikes me to be that sort of letter which I have seen men write when they are desirous that their disagreeable intelligence should be rather apprehended than expressed. I thought he had been in London a fortnight ago, disposing of property to meet this exigence, and so I think he should. Well, I must have patience. But these terrors and frights are truly annoying. Luckily the funny people are gone, and I shall not have the task of grinning when I am serious enough."

"A letter from J. B., mentioning Constable's journey, but without expressing much apprehension. He knows C well, and saw him before his departure, and makes no doubt of his being able easily to extricate whatever may be entangled. I will not therefore make myself uneasy. I can help doing so, surely, if I will. At least I have given up cigars since the year began, and have now no wish to return to the habit, as it is called. I see no reason why one should not, with God's assistance, shun noxious thoughts, which foretell evil and cannot remedy it."

"January 17—James Ballantyne this morning, good honest fellow, with a visage as black as the crook. He hopes no salvation, has indeed taken measures to stop. It is hard, after having fought such a battle. Have apologized for not attending the Royal Society Club, who have a *gaudeamus* on this day, and seemed to count much on my being the preses. My old acquaintance, Miss Elizabeth Clerk, sister of Willie,

died suddenly. I cannot choose but wish it had been Sir W. S., and yet the feeling is unmanly. I have Anne, my wife, and Charles to look after. I felt rather sneaking as I came home from the Parliament House—felt as if I were liable *monstrari digito* in no very pleasant way. But this must be borne *cum cæteris*, and, thank God, however uncomfortable, I do not feel despondent. I have seen Cadell, Ballantyne, and Hogarth, all advise me to execute a trust of my property for payment of my obligations, so does John Gibson,* and so I resolve to do. My wife and daughter are gloomy, but yet patient.

"January 18—He that sleeps too long in the morning, let him borrow the pillow of a debtor. So says the Spaniard, and so say I. I had of course an indifferent night of it. I wish these two days were over, but the worst is over. The Bank of Scotland has behaved very well, expressing a resolution to serve Constable's house and me to the uttermost, but as no one can say to what extent Hurst and Robinson's failure may go, borrowing would but linger it out.

"January 19—During yesterday I received formal visits from my friends Skene and Colin Mackenzie (who, I am glad to see, looks well), with every offer of service. The Royal Bank also sent Sir John Hope and Sir Henry Jardine to offer to comply with my wishes. The advocate came on the same errand. But I gave all the same answer, that my intention was to put the whole into the hands of a trustee, and to be contented with the event, and that all I had to ask was time to do so, and to extricate my affairs. I was assured of every accommodation in this way. From all quarters I have had the same kindness. Letters from Constable and Robinson have arrived. The last persist in saying they will pay all and everybody. They say, moreover, in a postscript, that had Constable been in town ten days sooner, all would have been well. I feel quite composed and determined to labour. There is no remedy. I guess (as Matthews makes his Yankees say) that we shall not be troubled with visitors, and I calculate that I will not go out at all, so what can I do better than labour? Even yesterday I went about making notes on *Waverley*, according to Constable's plan. It will do good one day. To-day, when I lock this volume I go to Woodstock. Heigho!—Knight came to stare at me to complete his portrait. He must have read a tragic page comparative to what he saw at Abbotsford. We dined of course at home, and before and after dinner I finished about twenty printed pages of *Woodstock*, but to what effect others must judge. A painful scene after dinner, and another after supper, endeavouring to convince these poor dear creatures that they must not look for miracles, but consider the misfortune as certain, and only to be lessened by patience and labour.

"Sir William Forbes † called, the same kind honest friend as ever,

* Mr John Gibson, junior, W S., Mr James Jolie, W S., and Mr Alexander Monypenny, W S., were the three gentlemen who ultimately agreed to take charge, as trustees, of Sir Walter Scott's affairs; and certainly no gentlemen ever acquitted themselves of such an office in a manner more honourable to themselves, or more satisfactory to a client and his creditors.

† The late Sir William Forbes, Bart., succeeded his father (the biographer of Beattie) as chief of the herd private banking house in Edinburgh. Scott's amiable friend died 24th October, 1823.

with all offers of assistance, &c., &c., &c. All anxious to serve me, and careless about their own risk of loss. And these are the cold, hard, money-making men whose questions and control I apprehended! Lord Chief Commissioner Adam also came to see me, and the meeting, though pleasing, was melancholy. It was the first time we had met since the *break-up* of his hopes in the death of his eldest son on his return from India, where he was chief in council and highly esteemed.* The Commissioner is not a very early friend of mine, for I scarce knew him till his settlement in Scotland with his present office. But I have since lived much with him, and taken kindly to him as one of the most pleasant, kind-hearted, benevolent men I have ever known. It is high treason among the Tories to express regard for him, or respect for the Jury Court in which he presides. I was against that experiment as much as any one. But it is an experiment, and the establishment (which the fools will not perceive) is the only thing which I see likely to give some prospects of ambition to our Bar, which has been otherwise so much diminished. As for the Chief Commissioner, I daresay he does what all other people of consequence do in elections and so forth. But he is the personal friend of the King, and the decided enemy of whatever strikes at the constitutional rights of the monarch, besides, I love him for the various changes which he has endured through life, and which have been so great as to make him entitled to be regarded in one point of view as the most fortunate, in the other the most unfortunate, man in the world. He has gained and lost two fortunes by the same good luck and the same rash confidence, of which one raised and the other now threatens my *peculium*. And his quiet, honourable, and generous submission under circumstances more painful than mine, for the loss of world's wealth was to him aggravated by the death of his youngest and darling son in the West Indies, furnished me at the time and now with a noble example.

'Well, Goodman Time, or blunt or keen,
Move thou quick, or take thy leisure,
Longest day will have its e'en,
Weariest life but treads a measure'

"I have seen Cadell, who is very much downcast for the risk of their copyrights being thrown away by a hasty sale. I suggested that if they went very cheap some means might be fallen on to purchase them in. I fear the split betwixt Constable and Cadell will render impossible what might otherwise be hopeful enough. It is the Italian race-horses, I think, which, instead of riders, have spurs tied to their sides, so as to prick them into a constant gallop. Cadell tells me their gross profit was sometimes £10,000 a year, but much swallowed up with expenses and his partner's draughts, which came to £4,000 yearly. What there is to show for this, God knows. Constable's apparent expenses were very much within bounds.

"Colin Mackenzie entered, and with his usual kindness engages to use his influence to recommend some moderate proceeding to Constable's creditors, such as may permit him to go on and turn that species of property to account, which no man alive can manage so well as he

* John Adam, Esq., died on shipboard on his passage homewards from Calcutta, 4th June, 1825.

"Followed Mr Gibson with a most melancholy tale Things are much worse with Constable than I apprehended Naked we entered the world, and naked we leave it—blessed be the name of the Lord !

"*January 22*—I feel neither dishonoured nor broken down by the bad—now really bad news I have received I have walked my last on the domains I have planted—sat the last time in the halls I have built. But death would have taken them from me if misfortune had spared them My poor people whom I loved so well ! There is just another die to turn up against me in this run of ill luck ; *z c*, if I should break my magie wand in the fall from this elephant, and lose my popularity with my fortune Then Woodstock and Bony may both go to the paper-maker, and I may take to smoking cigars and drinking grog, or turn devotee, and intoxicate the brain another way In prospect of absolute ruin I wonder if they would let me leave the Court of Session. I would like methinks to go abroad,

" " And lay my bones far from the *Tweed* "

"But I find my eyes moistening, and that will not do. I will not yield without a fight for it It is odd, when I set myself to work *doggedly*, as Dr Johnson would say, I am exactly the same man that I ever was—neither low-spirited nor *distract* In prosperous times I have sometimes felt my fancy and powers of language flag, but adversity is to me at least a tonic and bracer, the fountain is awakened from its inmost recesses, as if the spirit of affliction had troubled it in his passage

"Poor Mr. Pole the harper sent to offer me £500 or £600, probably his all * There is much good in the world after all. But I will involve no friend, either rich or poor My own right hand shall do it—else will I be *done* in the slang language, and *undone* in common parlance

"I am glad that beyond my own family, who are, excepting Lady S, young and able to bear sorrow, of which this is the first taste to some of them, most of the hearts are past aching which would have once been inconsolable on this occasion I do not mean that many will not seriously regret, and some perhaps lament my misfortunes But my dear mother, my almost sister, Christy Rutherford, poor Will Erskine—those would have been mourners indeed

"*January 24*—Constable came yesterday and saw me for half an hour He seemed irritable, but kept his temper under command Was a little shocked when I intimated that I was disposed to regard the present works in progress as my own I think I saw two things —1 That he is desirous to return into the management of his own affairs without Cadell, if he can 2 That he relies on my connection as the way of helping him out of the slough Indeed, he said he was ruined utterly without my countenance. I certainly will befriend him if I can, but Constable without Cadell is like getting the clock without the pendulum,—the one having the ingenuity, the other the caution of the business I will see my way before making any bargain, and I will help them, I am sure, if I can, without endangering my last cast for freedom Worked out my

* Mr Pole had long attended Sir Walter Scott's daughters as teacher of the harp To the end Scott always spoke of his conduct on this occasion as the most affecting circumstance that accompanied his daughters

task yesterday My kind friend Mrs Coutts has got the cadetship for Pringle Shortreed, in which I was peculiarly interested.

"I went to the Court for the first time to-day, and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps Many were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly, some obviously affected It is singular to see the difference of men's manner whilst they strive to be kind or civil in their way of addressing me Some smiled as they wished me good day, as if to say, 'Think nothing about it, my lad, it is quite out of our thoughts.' Others greeted me with the affected gravity which one sees and despises at a funeral. The best-bred—all, I believe, meaning equally well—just shook hands and went on A foolish puff in the papers, calling on men and gods to assist a popular author, who having choused the public of many thousands, had not the sense to keep wealth when he had it If I am hard pressed, and measures used against me, I must use all means of legal defence, and subscribe myself bankrupt in a petition for sequestration. It is the course one should, at any rate, have advised a client to take But for this I would, in a Court of Honour, deserve to lose my spurs No, if they permit me, I will be their vassal for life, and dig in the mine of my imagination to find diamonds (or what may sell for such) to make good my engagements, not to enrich myself And this from no reluctance to be called the Insolvent, which I probably am, but because I will not put out of the power of my creditors the resources, mental or literary, which yet remain to me Went to the funeral of Chevalier Yelin, the literary foreigner mentioned on 22nd How many and how various are the ways of affliction! Here is this poor man dying at a distance from home, his proud heart broken, his wife and family anxiously expecting letters, and doomed only to learn they have lost a husband and father for ever He lies buried on the Calton Hill, near learned and scientific dust, the graves of David Hume and John Playfair being side by side

"January 25—Anne is ill this morning May God help us! If it should prove serious, as I have known it in such cases, where am I to find courage or comfort? A thought has struck me Can we do nothing for creditors with the goblin drama, called the Fortunes of Devorgoil? Could it not be added to Woodstock as a fourth volume? Terry refused a gift of it, but he was quite and entirely wrong, it is not good, but it may be made so. Poor Will Erskine liked it much

"January 26—Spoke to J B last night about Devorgoil, who does not seem to relish the proposal, alleging the comparative failure of Halidon Hill Ay, says Self-Conceit, but he has not read it, and when he does, it is the sort of wild fanciful work betwixt heaven and earth, which men of solid parts do not estimate Pepys thought Shakespeare's Midsummer Night's Dream the most silly play he had ever seen, and Pepys was probably judging on the same grounds with J B, though presumptuous enough to form conclusions against a very different work from any of mine. How if I send it to Lockhart by-and-bye?

"Gibson comes with a joyful face, announcing all the creditors had unanimously agreed to a private trust This is handsome and confidential, and must warm my best efforts to get them out of the scrape. I will not doubt to doubt is to lose Sir William Forbes took the chair, and be-

lived, as he has ever done, with the generosity of ancient faith and early friendship. That house is more deeply concerned than most. In what scenes have Sir William and I not borne share together—desperate and almost bloody affrays, rivalries, deep drinking matches, and finally, with the kindest feelings on both sides, somewhat separated by his retiring much within the bosom of his family, and I moving little beyond mine. It is fated our planets should cross, though, and that at the periods most interesting for me. Down—down—a hundred thoughts!

"I hope to sleep better to-night. If I do not I shall get ill, and then I cannot keep my engagements. Is it not odd? I can command my eyes to be awake when toil and weariness sit on my eyelids, but to draw the curtain of oblivion is beyond my power.

"*January 27*—Slept better and less bilious, owing doubtless to the fatigue of the preceding night, and the more comfortable news. Wrote to Laidlaw, directing him to make all preparations for reduction. The Celtic Society present me with the most splendid broadsword I ever saw, a beautiful piece of art, and a most noble weapon. Honourable Mr Stewart (second son of the Earl of Moray), General Graham Stirling, and MacDougal, attended as a committee to present it. This was very kind of my friends the Celts, with whom I have had so many merry meetings. It will be a rare legacy to Walter—for myself, good luck! it is like Lady Dowager Don's prize in a lottery of hardware, she, a venerable lady who always wore a haunch-hoop, silk negligé, and triple ruffles at the elbow, having the luck to gain a pair of silver spurs and a whip to correspond.

"*January 28*—These last four or five days I have wrought little, to-day I set on the steam and ply my paddles.

"*January 29*—The proofs came so thick in yesterday that much was not done. But I began to be hard at work to-day. I must not gurnahze much.

"Mr Jollie, who is to be my trustee in conjunction with Gibson, came to see me—a pleasant and good-humoured man, and has high reputation as a man of business. I told him, and I will keep my word, that he would at least have no trouble by my interfering and thwarting their management, which is not the unfrequent case of trusters and trustees.

"Constable's business seems unintelligible. No man thought the house worth less than £150,000. Constable told me, when he was making his will, that he was worth £80,000. Great profits on almost all the adventures. No bad speculations, yet neither stock nor debt to show. Constable might have eaten up his share; but Cadell was very frugal. No doubt trading almost entirely on accommodation is dreadfully expensive.

"*January 30*—I laboured fairly yesterday. The stream rose fast—if clearly, is another question, but there is bulk for it at least—about thirty printed pages.

" 'And now again, boys, to the oar.'

"*January 31*—There being nothing in the roll this morning, I stay at home from the Court, and add another day's perfect labour to Woodstock, which is worth five days of snatched intervals, when the current of thought and invention is broken in upon, and the mind shaken and

diverted from its purpose by a succession of petty interruptions. I have now no pecuniary provisions to embarrass me, and I think, now the shock of the discovery is past and over, I am much better off on the whole. I feel as if I had shaken off from my shoulders a great mass of garments, rich indeed, but always more a burden than a comfort. I shall be free of an hundred petty public duties imposed on me as a man of consideration—of the expense of a great hospitality—and what is better, of the great waste of time connected with it. I have known in my day all kinds of society, and can pretty well estimate how much or how little one loses by retiring from all but that which is very intimate. I sleep and eat and work as I was wont, and if I could see those about me as indifferent to the loss of rank as I am, I should be completely happy. As it is, Time must salve that sore, and to Time I trust it.

"Since the 14th of this month no guest has broken bread in my house, save G. H. Gordon* one morning at breakfast. This happened never before since I had a house of my own. But I have played Abou Hassan long enough, and if the Caliph comes I would turn him back again.

"February 1.—A most generous letter (though not more so than I expected) from Walter and Jane, offering to interpose with their fortune, &c. God Almighty forbid!—that were too unnatural in me to accept, though dutiful and affectionate in them to offer. They talk of India still. With my damaged fortune I cannot help them to remain by exchange, and so forth. God send what is for the best. Attended the Court, and saw J. B. and Cadell as I returned. Both very gloomy. Came home to work, &c., about two.

"John Gibson came to tell me in the evening that a meeting to-day had approved of the proposed trust. I know not why, but the news gives me little concern. I heard it as a party indifferent. I remember hearing that Mandrin† testified some horror when he found himself bound alive on the wheel, and saw the executioner approach with a bar of iron to break his limbs. After the second and third blow, he fell laughing, and being asked the reason by his confessor, said he laughed at his own folly, which had anticipated increased agony at every blow, when it was obvious that the *first* must have jarred and confounded the system of the nerves so much as to render the succeeding blows of little consequence. I suppose it is so with the moral feeling, at least I could not bring myself to be anxious whether these matters were settled one way or other.

"February 4.—Wrote to Mr. Laidlaw to come to town upon Monday, and see the trustees. To farm or not to farm, that is the question. With our careless habits, it were best, I think, to risk as little as possible. Lady Scott will not exceed with ready money in her hand, but calculating on the produce of a farm is different, and neither she nor I are capable of that minute economy. Two cows should be all we should

* Mr. Gordon (of whom more in the sequel) was at this time Scott's amanuensis he copied, that is to say, the MS. for press.

† "Authentic Memoirs of the remarkable Life and surprising Exploits of Mandrin, Captain-General of the French Smugglers, who for the space of nine months resolutely stood in defiance of the whole army of France, &c. &c. London, 1777." *Abbotsford Library*—See Gentleman's Magazine, vol. xxi. Note, Waverley Novels, vol. xxvii. p. 434.

keep But I find Lady S inclines much for the four If she had her youthful activity, and could manage things, it would be well, and would amuse her But I fear it is too late for work

"Wrote only two pages (of manuscript) and a half to-day As the boatswain said, one can't dance always *nouth* But, were we sure of the quality of the stuff, what opportunities for labour does this same system of retreat afford us? I am convinced that in three years I could do more than in the last ten, but for the mine being, I fear, exhausted Give me my popularity (*an awful postulate*!), and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years, and it is not lost yet, at least.

"February 5—Rose after a sound sleep, and here am I without bile or anything to perturb my inward man It is just about three weeks since so great a change took place in my relations in society, and already I am indifferent to it But I have been always told my feelings of joy and sorrow, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and privation, are much colder than those of other people

" 'I think the Romans call it stoicism.'

"Missie was in the drawing-room, and overheard William Clerk and me laughing excessively at some foolery or other in the back room, to her no small surprise, which she did not keep to herself But do people suppose that he was less sorry for his poor sister or I for my lost fortune? If I have a very strong passion in the world, it is *pride*, and that never linged upon world's gear, which was always with me—Light come, light go

"February 6—Letters received yesterday from Lord Montagu, John Morritt, and Mrs Hughes, kind and dear friends all, with solicitous inquiries But it is very tiresome to tell my story over again, and I really hope I have few more friends intimate enough to ask me for it I dread letter-writing, and envy the old hermit of Prague, who never saw pen or ink What then? one must write, it is a part of the law we live on Talking of writing, I finished my six pages, neat and handsome, yesterday N B—At night I fell asleep, and the oil dropped from the lamp upon my manuscript Will this extreme unction make it go smoothly down with the public?

" 'Thus idly we profane the sacred time

By silly prose, light jest, and lighter rhyme'

"I have a song to write, too, and I am not thinking of it. I trust it will come upon me at once—a sort of catch it should be.* I walked out, feeling a little overwrought

"February 7—My old friend Sir Peter Murray called to offer his own assistance, Lord Justice-Clerk's, and Abercromby's, to negotiate for me a seat upon the Bench (of the Court of Session) instead of my sheriffdom and clerkship I explained to him the use which I could make of my pen was not, I thought, consistent with that situation, and that, besides, I had neglected the law too long to permit me to think of it, but this was as kindly and honourably done I can see people think me much worse off than I think myself They may be right, but I will not be beat till I have tried a rally, and a bold one

* See "Glee for King Charles," *Waverley Novels*, vol. xl. p. 40

February 8 — Slept ill, and rather bilious in the morning. Many of the Bench now are my juniors. I will not seek *ex eleemosynâ* a place which, had I turned my studies that way, I might have aspired to long ago *ex meritis*. My pen should do much better for me than the odd £1,000 a year. If it fails, I will lean on what they leave me. Another chance might be, if it fails, in the patronage which might after a year or two place me in Exchequer. But I do not count on this, unless, indeed, the Duke of Buccleuch, when he comes of age, should choose to make play. Got to my work again, and wrote easier than the two last days.

"Mr Laudlaw came in from Abbotsford, and dined with us. We spent the evening in laying down plans for the farm, and deciding whom we should keep and whom dismiss among the people. This we did on the true negro-driving principle of self-interest—the only principle I know which *never* swerves from its objects. We chose all the active, young, and powerful men, turning old age and infirmity adrift. I cannot help this, for a guinea cannot do the work of five, but I will contrive to make it easier to the sufferers."

CHAPTER XXIV.

SCOTT'S RESOLUTION TO WRITE OFF THE DEBT—DEPARTURE FROM CASTLE STREET—DEATH OF LADY SCOTT

I INTERRUPT for a moment Sir Walter's Diary to introduce a few collateral illustrations of the period embraced in the foregoing chapter. When he returned to Edinburgh from Abbotsford on Monday the 16th of January, he found that Hurst and Co had dishonoured a bill of Constables, and then proceeded, according to engagement, to dine at Mr Skene of Rubislaw's. Mr Skene assures me that he appeared that evening quite in his usual spirits, conversing on whatever topic was started as easily and gaily as if there had been no impending calamity, but at parting he whispered, "Skene, I have something to speak to you about, be so good as to look in on me as you go to the Parliament House to-morrow." When Skene called in Castle Street, about half-past nine o'clock next morning, he found Scott writing in his study. He rose and said, "My friend, give me a shake of your hand—mine is that of a beggar." He then told him that Ballantyne had just been with him, and that his ruin was certain and complete, explaining briefly the nature of his connection with the three houses, whose downfall must that morning be made public. He added, "Don't fancy I am going to stay at home to brood idly on what can't be helped. I was at work upon Woodstock when you came in, and I shall take up the pen the moment I get back from Court. I mean to dine with you again on Sunday, and hope then to report progress to some purpose." When Sunday came he reported accordingly, that, in spite of all the numberless interruptions of meetings and conferences with his partner, the Constables, and men of business—to say nothing of his distressing anxieties on account of his wife and daughter—he had written a chapter of his novel every intervening day.

The reader may be curious to see what account James Ballantyne's Memorandum gives of that dark announcement on the morning of Tuesday the 17th. It is as follows—"On the evening of the 16th I received from Mr Cadell a distinct message putting me in possession of the truth. I called immediately in Castle Street, but found Sir Walter had gained an unconscious respite by being engaged out at dinner. It was between eight and nine next morning that I made the final communication. No doubt he was greatly stunned—but, upon the whole, he bore it with wonderful fortitude. He then asked, 'Well, what is the actual step we must first take—I suppose we must do something?' I reminded him that two or three thousand pounds were due that day, so that we had only to do what we must do—refuse payment—to bring the disclosure sufficiently before the world. He took leave of me with these striking words, 'Well, James, depend upon that, I will never forsake you.'

“Edinburgh, January 20, 1826

“MY DEAR LOCKHART—I have your kind letter. Whenever I heard that Constable had made a *cessio forei*, I thought it became me to make public how far I was concerned in these matters, and to offer my fortune so far as it was prestable, and the completion of my literary engagements—the better thing almost of the two—to make good all claims upon Ballantyne and Co., and even supposing that neither Hurst and Co. nor Constable and Co. ever pay a penny they owe me, my old age will be far from destitute—even if my right hand should lose its cunning. This is the *very worst* that can befall me, but I have little doubt that, with ordinary management, the affairs of those houses will turn out favourably. It is needless to add that I will not engage myself, as Constable desires, for £20,000 more—or £2,000—or £200. I have advanced enough already to pay other people's debts, and now must pay my own. If our friend C had set out a fortnight earlier nothing of all this would have happened, but he let the hour of distress precede the hour of provision, and he and others must pay for it. Yet don't hint this to him, poor fellow, it is an infirmity of nature.

“I have made my matters public, and have had splendid offers of assistance, all which I have declined, for I would rather bear my own burden than subject myself to obligation. There is but one way in such cases.

“It is easy, no doubt, for any friend to blame me for entering into connection with commercial matters at all. But I wish to know what I could have done better, excluded from the Bar, and then from all profits for six years, by my colleague's prolonged life. Literature was not in those days what poor Constable has made it, and, with my little capital, I was too glad to make commercially the means of supporting my family. I got but £600 for the Lay of the Last Minstrel, and—it was a price that made men's hair stand on end—£1,000 for Marmion. I have been far from suffering by James Ballantyne. I owe it to him to say, that his difficulties, as well as his advantages, are owing to me. I trusted too much to Constable's assurances of his own and his correspondents' stability, but yet I believe he was only sanguine. The upshot is just what Hurst and Co. and Constable may be able to pay me, if 15s in the pound, I shall not complain of my loss, for I have gained many thousands in my day. But while I live I shall regret the downfall of Constable's house, for never did there exist so intelligent and so liberal an establishment. They went too far when money was plenty, that is certain, yet if every author in Britain had taxed himself half a year's income, he should have kept up the house which first broke in upon the monopoly of the London trade, and made letters what they now are.

“I have had visits from all the moneyed people, offering their purses—and those who are creditors, sending their managers and treasurers to assure me of their joining in and adopting any measures I may propose. I am glad of this for their sake, and for my own, for although I shall not desire to steer, yet I am the only person that can *canvass*, as Lieutenant Hatchway says, to any good purpose. A very odd anonymous offer I had of £30,000,* which I rejected, as I did every other. Unless I die, I

* Sir Walter never knew the name of this munificent person.

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

shall beat up against this foul weather. A penny I will not borrow from any one. Since my creditors are content to be patient, I have the means of righting them perfectly, and the confidence to employ them. I would have given a good deal to have avoided the *coup d'état*, but that having taken place, I would not give sixpence for any other results. I fear you will think I am writing in the heat of excited resistance to bad fortune. My dear Lockhart, I am as calm and temperate as you ever saw me, and working at Woodstock like a very tiger. I am grieved for Lady Scott and Anne, who cannot conceive adversity can have the better of them, even for a moment. If it teaches a little of the frugality which I never had the heart to enforce when money was plenty, and it seemed cruel to interrupt the enjoyment of it in the way they liked best, it will be well.

"Kindest love to Sophia, and tell her to study the song* and keep her spirits up. Tyne heart, tyne all, and it is making more of money than it is worth to grieve about it. Kiss Johnnie for me. How glad I am fortune carried you to London before these reverses happened, as they would have embattered parting, and made it resemble the boat leaving the sinking ship—Yours, dear Lockhart, affectionately, WALTER SCOTT."

I offer no cold comments on the strength of character which Sir Walter Scott exhibited in the crisis of his calamities. But for the revelations of his Drury it would never have been known to his most intimate friends, or even to his own affectionate children, what struggles it cost him to reach the lofty serenity of mind which was reflected in all his outward conduct and demeanour.

As yet, however, he had hardly prepared himself for the extent to which Constable's debts exceeded his assets. The obligations of that house amounted, on a final reckoning, to £256,000, those of Hurst and Robinson to somewhere about £300,000. The former paid, ultimately, only 2s 9d. in the pound, the latter about 1s 3d.

The firm of James Ballantyne and Co might have allowed itself to be declared bankrupt, and obtained a speedy discharge, as the bookselling concerns did, for all its obligations, but that Sir Walter Scott was a partner. Had he chosen to act in the manner commonly adopted by commercial insolvents, the matter would have been settled in a very short time. The creditors of Ballantyne and Co—(whose claims, including shares of bills of all descriptions, amounted to £117,000)—would have brought into the market whatever property, literary or otherwise, he at the hour of failure possessed, they would have had a right to his liferent of Abbotsford, among other things, and to his reversionary interest in the estate, in case either his eldest son or his daughter-in-law should die without leaving issue, and thus void the provisions of their marriage contract. All this being brought into the market, the result would have been a dividend very far superior to what the creditors of Constable and Hurst received; and in return, he partners in the printing firm would have been left at liberty to reap for themselves the profits of their future exertions. Things were, however, complicated in consequence of the transfer of Abbotsford in January, 1825. At first, some creditors seem to have had serious thoughts of contesting the validity of that transaction;

* "Up with the banners of Bonnie Dundee."

but a little reflection and examination satisfied them that nothing could be gained by such an attempt. But, on the other hand, Sir Walter felt that he had done wrong in placing any part of his property beyond the reach of his creditors, by entering into that marriage contract without a previous most deliberate examination into the state of his responsibilities. He must have felt in this manner, though I have no sort of doubt that the result of such an examination in January, 1825, if accompanied by an instant calling in of all *counter-bills*, would have been to leave him to do all that he did upon that occasion. However that may have been, and whatever may have been his delicacy respecting this point, he regarded the embarrassment of his commercial firm, on the whole, with the feelings not of a merchant but of a gentleman. He thought that by devoting the rest of his life to the service of his creditors, he could, in the upshot, pay the last farthing he owed them. They (with one or two paltry exceptions) applauded his honourable intentions and resolutions, and partook, to a large extent, in the self-reliance of their debtor. Nor had they miscalculated as to their interest. Nor had Sir Walter calculated wrongly. He paid the penalty of health and life, but he saved his honour and his self-respect.

"The glory dies not, and the grief is past"

As soon as Parliament met, the recent convulsion in the commercial world became the subject of some very remarkable debates in the Lower House; and the Ministers, tracing it mainly to the rash facility of bankers in yielding credit to speculators, proposed to strike at the root of the evil by taking from private banks the privilege of circulating their own notes as money, and limiting even the Bank of England to the issue of notes of £5 value and upwards. The Government designed that this regulation should apply to Scotland as well as England, and the northern public received the announcement with almost universal reprobation. The Scotch banks apprehended a most serious curtailment of their profits; and the merchants and traders of every class were well disposed to back them in opposing the Ministerial innovation. Scott, ever sensitively jealous as to the interference of English statesmen with the internal affairs of his native kingdom, took the matter up with as much zeal as he could have displayed against the Union had he lived in the days of Queen Anne. His national feelings may have been somewhat stimulated, perhaps, by his deep sense of gratitude for the generous forbearance which several Edinburgh banking-houses had just been exhibiting towards himself, and I think it need not be doubted, moreover, that the *splendida bills* which, as the Diary shows, his own misfortunes had engendered, demanded some escape-valve. Hence the three Letters of Malachi Malagrowther, which appeared first in the Edinburgh Weekly Journal, and were afterwards collected into a pamphlet by the late Mr Blackwood, who, on that occasion, for the first time, had justice done to his personal character by "the Black Hussar of Literature."

These diatribes produced in Scotland a sensation not, perhaps, inferior to that of the Drapier's Letters in Ireland, a greater one, certainly, than any political tract had excited in the British public at large since the appearance of Burke's Reflections on the French Revolution. They were

answered most elaborately and acutely in the London Courier (the then semi-official organ of Lord Liverpool's Government) by Sir Walter's friend, the Secretary of the Admiralty, Mr Croker, who, perhaps, hazarded, in the heat of his composition, a few personal allusions that might as well have been spared, and which might have tempted a less good-natured antagonist to a fiery rejoinder. Meeting, however, followed meeting, and petition on petition came up with thousands of signatures, and the Ministers ere long found that the opposition, of which Malachi had led the van, was, in spite of all their own speeches and Mr Croker's essays, too strong and too rapidly strengthening to be safely encountered. The Scotch part of the measure was dropped; and Scott, having carried his practical object, was not at all disposed to persist in a controversy which if further pursued, could scarcely, as he foresaw, fail to interrupt the kindly feelings that Croker and he had for many years entertained for each other, and also to aggravate and prolong, unnecessarily, the resentment with which several of his friends in the Cabinet had regarded his unlooked-for appearance as a hostile agitator.

I believe, with these hints, the reader is sufficiently prepared for resuming Sir Walter's Diary.

DIARY.

"*Edinburgh, February 10*—Went through, for a new day, the task of buttoning, which seems to me somehow to fill up more of my morning than usual—not, certainly, that such is the case, but that my mind attends to the process, having so little left to hope or fear. The half-hour between waking and rising has all my life proved propitious to any task which was exercising my invention. When I got over any knotty difficulty in a story, or have had in former times to fill up a passage in a poem, it was always when I first opened my eyes that the desired ideas thronged upon me. This is so much the case, that I am in the habit of relying upon it, and saying to myself, when I am at a loss 'Never mind, we shall have it at seven o'clock to-morrow morning.' If I have forgot a circumstance, or a name, or a copy of verses, it is the same thing. I think the first hour of the morning is also favourable to the bodily strength. Among other feats, when I was a young man, I was able at times to lift a smith's anvil with one hand, by what is called the *horn*—that projecting piece of iron on which things are beaten to turn them round. But I could only do this before breakfast. It required my full strength, undiminished by the least exertion, and those who choose to try will find the feat no easy one. This morning I had some new ideas respecting Woodstock, which will make the story better. The devil of a difficulty is, that one puzzles the skien in order to excite curiosity, and then cannot disentangle it for the satisfaction of the prying fiend they have raised. I have a prettily expressed letter of condolence from Sir James Mackintosh. Yesterday I had an anecdote from old Sir James Stewart Denham, which is worth writing down. His uncle, Lord Elcho, was, as is well known, engaged in the affair of 1745. He was dissatisfied with the conduct of matters from beginning to end. But after the left wing of the Highlanders was repulsed and broken at Culloden Elcho rode up to the Chevalier and told him all was lost, and that nothing remained except to charge at

the head of two thousand men, who were still unbroken, and either turn the fate of the day or die sword in hand, as became his pretensions. The Chevalier gave him some evasive answer, and, turning his horse's head, rode off the field. Lord Elcho called after him (I write his very words), 'There you go for a cowardly Italian,' and never would see him again, though he lost his property and remained an exile in the cause. Lord Elcho left two copies of his memoirs, one with Sir James Stewart's family, one with Lord Wemyss. This is better evidence than the romance of Chevalier Johnstone, and I have little doubt it is true. Yet it is no proof of the Prince's cowardice, though it shows him to have been no John of Gaunt. Princes are constantly surrounded with people who hold up their own *life and safety* to them as by far the most important stake in any contest, and this is a doctrine in which conviction is easily received. Such an eminent person finds everybody's advice, save here and there that of a desperate Elcho, recommend obedience to the natural instinct of self-preservation, which very often men of inferior situations find it difficult to combat, when all the world are crying to them to get on and be damned, instead of encouraging them to run away. At Prestonpans the Chevalier offered to lead the van, and he was with the second line, which, during that brief affair, followed the first very close. Johnstone's own account, carefully read, brings him within a pistol-shot of the first line. At the same time Charles Edward had not a head or heart for great things, notwithstanding his daring adventure, and the Irish officers, by whom he was guided, were poor creatures. Lord George Murray was the soul of the undertaking.

"February 12.—Having ended the second volume of Woodstock last night, I had to begin the third this morning. Now I have not the slightest idea how the story is to be wound up to a catastrophe. I am just in the same case as I used to be when I lost myself in former days in some country to which I was a stranger. I always pushed for the pleasantest route, and either found or made it the nearest. It is the same in writing. I never could lay down a plan—or, having laid it down, I never could adhere to it, the action of composition always extended some passages, and abridged or omitted others, and personages were rendered important or insignificant, not according to their agency in the original conception of the piece, but according to the success, or otherwise, with which I was able to bring them out. I only tried to make that which I was actually writing diverting and interesting, leaving the rest to fate. I have been often amused with the critics distinguishing some passages as particularly laboured, when the pen passed over the whole as fast as it could move, and the eye never again saw them, except in proof. Verse I write twice, and sometimes three times over. This *habnab at a venture* is a perilous style, I grant, but I cannot help it. When I strain my mind to ideas which are purely imaginative—for argument is a different thing—it seems to me that the sun leaves the landscape—that I flunk away the whole vivacity of my original conception, and that the results are cold, tame, and spiritless. It is the difference between a written oration and one bursting from the unpremeditated exertions of the speaker, which have always something the air of enthusiasm and inspiration. I would not have young authors imitate my carelessness, however,

"Read a few pages of Will D'Avenant, who was fond of having it supposed that Shakespeare intrigned with his mother. I think the pretension can only be treated as Phaeton was, according to Fielding's farce—

"'Besides, by all the village boys I'm shamed,
You, the sun's son, you rascal! you be d——d'

"Egad! I'll put that into Woodstock. It might come well from the old admirer of Shakespeare. Then Fielding's lines were not written. What then? it is an anachronism for some sly rogue to detect. Besides, it is easy to swear they were written, and that Fielding adopted them from tradition*.

"Saw Cadell as I returned from the Court. He seemed dejected, and gloomy about the extent of stock of novels, &c, on hand. He infected me with his want of spirits, and I almost wish my wife had not asked Mr Scrope and Charles K Sharpe for this day. But the former sent such loads of game that Lady Scott's gratitude became ungovernable. I have not seen a creature at dinner since the dreadful 17th of January, except my own family and Mr Lullaw. The love of solitude increases by indulgence, I hope it will not diverge into misanthropy. It does not mend the matter that this is the first day that a ticket for sale is on my house, poor No 39. One gets accustomed even to stone walls, and the place suited me very well. All our furniture too is to go—a hundred little articles that seemed to me connected with all the happier years of my life. It is a sorry business. But *sursum corda*.

"My two friends came as expected, also Missie, and stayed till half-past ten. Promised Sharpe the set of Piranesi's views in the dining-parlour. They belonged to my uncle, so I do not like to sell them.

"February 16—'Misfortune's growling bark' comes louder and louder. By assigning my whole property to trustees for behoof of creditors, with two works in progress and nigh publication, and with all my future literary labours, I conceived I was bringing into the field a large fund of payment, which could not exist without my exertions, and that thus far I was entitled to a corresponding degree of indulgence. I therefore supposed, on selling this house and various other property, and on receiving the price of Woodstock and Napoleon, that they would give me leisure to make other exertions, and be content with the rents of Abbotsford, without attempting a sale. This would have been the more reasonable as the very printing of these works must amount to a large sum, of which they will touch the profits. In the course of this delay I supposed I was to have the chance of getting some insight both into Constable's affairs and those of Hurst and Robinson. Nay, employing these houses under precautions to sell the works, the publishers' profit would have come in to pay part of their debt. But Gibson last night came in after dinner, and gave me to understand that the Bank of Scotland see this in a different point of view, and consider my contribution of the produce of past present, and future labours, as compensated in full by their accepting of the trust-deed, instead of pursuing the mode of sequestration, and placing me in the Gazette. They therefore expect the trustees to commence a lawsuit to reduce the marriage settlement, which settles the

* See the couplet and the apology in Woodstock—Waverley Novels, vol. 21. p 131

estate upon Walter, thus loading me with a most expensive suit, and I suppose selling library and whatever else they can lay hold on

"Now this seems unequal measure, and would besides of itself totally destroy any power of fancy, of genius, if it deserves the name, which may remain to me. A man cannot write in the House of Correction, and this species of *peine forte et dure* which is threatened would render it impossible for one to help himself or others. So I told Gibson I had my mind made up as far back as the 24th of January, not to suffer myself to be harder pressed than law would press me. If this great commercial company, through whose hands I have directed so many thousands, think they are right in taking every advantage and giving none, it must be my care to see that they take none but what the law gives them. If they take the sword of the law, I must lay hold of the shield. If they are determined to consider me as an irremediable bankrupt, they have no title to object to my settling upon the usual terms which the statute requires. They probably are of opinion that I will be ashamed to do this by applying publicly for a sequestration. Now my feelings are different. I am ashamed to owe debts I cannot pay, but I am not ashamed of being classed with those to whose rank I belong. The disgrace is in being an actual bankrupt, not in being made a legal one. I had like to have been too hasty in this matter. I must have a clear understanding that I am to be benefited or indulged in some way if I bring in two such funds as those works in progress, worth certainly from £10,000 to £15,000.

"February 18—I set about Malachi Malagrowther's Letter on the late disposition to change everything in Scotland to an English model, but without resolving about the publication. They do treat us very provokingly

"O Land of Cakes! said the Northern bard,
Though all the world betrays thee,
One faithful pen thy rights shall guard,
One faithful harp shall praise thee!"

"February 19—Finished my letter (Malachi Malagrowther) this morning, and sent it to James B., who is to call with the result this forenoon. I am not very anxious to get on with Woodstock. I want to see what Constable's people mean to do when they have their trustee. For an unfinished work they must treat with the author. It is the old story of the varnish spread over the picture, which nothing but the artist's own hand could remove. A finished work might be seized under some legal pretence.

"Being troubled with thick-coming fancies and a slight palpitation of the heart, I have been reading the Chronicle of the Good Knight Messire Jacques de Lalain—curious, but dull from the constant repetition of the same species of combats in the same style and phrase. It is like washing bushels of sand for a grain of gold. It passes the time, however, especially in that listless mood when your mind is half on your book, half on something else. You catch something to arrest the attention every now and then, and what you miss is not worth going back upon, idle man's studies, in short. Still things occur to one. Something might be made of a tale of chivalry, taken from the Passage of Arms which Jacques de

* A parody on Moore's *Minstrel Boy*

Lalain maintained for the first day of every month for a twelvemonth * The first mention perhaps of red-hot balls appears in the siege of Oudenarde by the citizens of Ghent.—*Chronique*, p. 293 This would be light summer work

"J. B. came and sat an hour I led him to talk of Woodstock, and, to say truth, his approbation did me much good I am aware it *may*, nay, *must* be partial, yet is he Tom Tell-truth, and totally unable to disguise his real feelings I think I make no habit of feeding on praise, and despise those whom I see greedy for it, as much as I should an under-bred fellow who, after eating a cherry tart, proceeded to lick the plate But when one is flagging, a little praise (if it can be had genuine and unadulterated by flattery, which is as difficult to come by as the genuine mountain-dew) is a cordial after all So now—*amos corazon*—let us atone for the loss of the morning

"February 20—Yesterday, though late in beginning, I nearly finished my task, which is six of my close pages, about thirty pages of print, a full and uninterrupted day's work To-day I have already written four, and with some confidence Thus does flattery or praise oil the wheels It is but two o'clock Skene was here remonstrating against my taking apartments at the Albion Club, and recommending that I should rather stay with them I told him that was altogether impossible I hoped to visit them often, but for taking a permanent residence, I was altogether the country mouse, and voted for

"——'A hollow tree,
A crust of bread and liberty'

'The chain of friendship, however bright, does not stand the attrition of constant close contact

"February 21—Corrected the proofs of *Malachi* this morning, it may all dead, and there will be a squib lost, it may chance to light on some ingredients of national feeling and set folks' beards in a blaze, and so much the better if it does I mean better for Scotland, not a whit for me Attended the hearing in Parliament House till near four o'clock, so I shall do little to-night for I am tired and sleepy One person talking for a long time, whether in pulpit or at the bar, or anywhere else, unless, the interest be great and the eloquence of the highest character, sets me to sleep I impudently lean my head on my hand in the Court and take my nap without shame The Lords may keep awake and mind their own affairs *Quod supra nos nihil ad nos* These clerks' stools are certainly as easy seats as are in Scotland, those of the Barons of Exchequer always excepted

"February 22—Ballantyne breakfasted, and is to negotiate about *Malachi* with Blackwood It reads not amiss, and if I can get a few guineas for it, I shall not be ashamed to take them, for, paying Lady Scott, I have just left between £3 and £4 for any necessary occasion, and my salary does not become due until 20th March, and the expense of removing, &c., is to be provided for

"But shall we go mourn for that, my dear?"

"The mere scarcity of money (so that actual wants are provided) is not

* This hunt was taken up in Count Robert of Paris,

poverty, it is the bitter draught to owe money which we cannot pay. Laboured fairly at Woodstock to-day, but principally in revising and adding to Malachi, of which an edition as a pamphlet is anxiously desired. The banks are anxious to have it published. They were lately exercising lenity towards me, and if I can benefit them, it will be an instance of the 'King's errand lying in the cadger's gate.'

"February 24—Went down to printing office after the Court, and corrected Malachi. J. B. reproaches me with having taken much more pains in this temporary pamphlet than on works which have a greater interest on my fortunes. I have certainly bestowed enough of revision and correction. But the cases are different. In a novel or poem, I run the course alone—here I am taking up the cudgels, and may expect a dinbbling in return. Besides, I do feel that this is public matter in which the country is deeply interested, and, therefore, is far more important than anything referring to my fame or fortune alone. The pamphlet will soon be out, meantime Malachi prospers and excites much attention. The banks have bespoke 500 copies. The country is taking the alarm, and, I think, the Ministers will not dare to press the measure. I should rejoice to see the old red lion ramp a little, and the thistle again claim its *nemo me impune*. I do believe Scotsmen will show themselves unanimous at last, where their cash is concerned. They shall not want backing. I incline to cry with Byron in *Love's Labour's Lost*,

" 'More Ates, more Ates' stir them on ' "

"I suppose all imaginative people feel more or less of excitation from a scene of insurrection or tumult, or of general expression of national feeling. When I was a lad, poor Davie Douglas used to accense me of being *cupidus notam rerum*, and say that I loved the stimulus of a broil. It might be so then, and even still—

" 'Even in our ashes live their wonted fires ' "

"Whimsical enough, that when I was trying to animate Scotland against the currency bill, John Gibson brought me the deed of trust, assigning my whole estate, to be subscribed by me, so that I am turning patriot, and taking charge of the affairs of the country, on the very day I proclaim myself incapable of managing my own. What of that? Who would think of their own trumpery debts, when they are taking the support of the whole system of Scottish banking on their shoulders? Odd enough too—on this day, for the first time since the awful 17th January, we entertain a party at dinner—Lady Anna Maria Elliot, W. Clerk, John A. Murray, and Thomas Thomson—as if we gave a dinner on account of my *cessio forei*.

"February 25—Our party yesterday went off very gaily, much laugh and fun, and I think I enjoyed it more from the rarity of the event—I mean from having seen society at home so seldom of late. My head aches slightly, though, yet we were but a bottle of champagne, one of port, one of old sherry, and two of claret, among four gentlemen and three ladies. I have been led from this incident to think of taking chambers near Clerk, in Rose Court. Methinks the retired situation should suit me well. Then a man and woman would be my whole establishment. My superfluous furniture might serve, and I could ask a

friend or two to dinner, as I have been accustomed to do. I shall look at the piece to-day. I must set now to a second epistle of Malachi to the Athenians. If I can but get the sulky Scottish spirit set up, the devil won't turn them.

“Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprash,
We'll over the Border, and give them a brush
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour;
Hey, Johnnie, lad, cock up your beaver.”

“*March 1*—Malachi is in the Edinburgh Journal to-day, and reads like the work of an uncompromising right-forward Scot of the old school. Some of the cantious and pluckless instigators will be afraid of their confederate, for if a man of some energy and openness of character happens to be on the same side with these jobbers, they stand as much in awe of his vehemence as did the inexperienced conjuror who invoked a fiend whom he could not manage. Came home in a heavy shower with the solicitor. I tried him on the question, but found him reserved. The future Lord Advocate must be cautious, but I can tell my good friend John Hope that if he act the part of a firm and resolute Scottish patriot, both his own country and England will respect him the more. Ah! Hal Dundas, there was no truckling in thy day!”

“Looked out a quantity of things to go to Abbotsford, for we are sitting, if you please. It is with a sense of pain that I leave behind a parcel of trumpery prints and little ornaments, once the pride of Lady S——’s heart, but which she sees consigned with indifference to the chance of an auction. Things that have had their day of importance with me I cannot forget, though the merest trifles. But I am glad that she, with bad health and enough to vex her, has not the same useless mode of associating recollections with this unpleasant business. The best part of it is the necessity of leaving behind, viz. getting rid of, a set of most wretched daubs of landscapes in great gilded frames, of which I have often been heartily ashamed. The history of them was curious. An amateur artist (a lady) happened to fall into misfortunes, upon which her landscapes, the character of which had been buoyed up far beyond their proper level, sank now beneath it, and it was low enough. One most amiable and accomplished old lady continued to encourage her pencil, and to order pictures after pictures, which she sent in presents to her friends. I suppose I have eight or ten of them, which I could not avoid accepting. There will be plenty of laughing when they come to be sold.”

“*March 12*—Resumed Woodstock, and wrote my task of six pages. I cannot gurnalize, however, having wrought my eyes nearly out.”

“*March 13*—Wrote to the end of a chapter, and knowing no more than the man in the moon what comes next, I will put down a few of Lord Elgin’s remembrances, and something may occur to me in the meanwhile * * * *

“I have hinted in these notes that I am not entirely free from a sort of gloomy fits, with a fluttering of the heart and depression of spirits, just as if I knew not what was going to befall me. I can sometimes resist this successfully, but it is better to evade than to combat it. The hang-dog spirit may have originated in the confusion and chucking about of our old furniture, the stripping of walls of pictures, and rooms of

ornaments, the leaving of a house we have so long called our home, is altogether melancholy enough. I am glad Lady S does not mind it, and yet I wonder, too. She insists on my remaining till Wednesday, not knowing what I suffer. Meanwhile, to make my recusant spirit do penance, I have set to work to clear away papers and pack them for my journey. What a strange medley of thoughts such a task produces! There be letters which made the heart throb when received, now lifeless and uninteresting, as are perhaps their writers. Riddles which have been read, schemes which time has destroyed or brought to maturity, memorials of friendships and civilities which are now alike faded. Thus does the ring of Sustain consume itself. To-day annihilates yesterday, as the old tyrant swallowed his children, and the snake its tale * * *

"I have amused myself occasionally very pleasantly during the last few days by reading over Lady Morgan's novel of O'Donnel, which has some striking and beautiful passages of situation and description, and in the comic part is very rich and entertaining. I do not remember being so much pleased with it at first. There is a want of story, always fatal to a book the first reading, and it is well if it gets a chance of a second. Alas, poor novel! Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of *Pride and Prejudice*. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements, and feelings, and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going, but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me. What a pity such a gifted creature died so early!"

"*March 15*—This morning I leave No 39 Castle Street for the last time. 'The cabin was convenient,' and habit had made it agreeable to me. I never reckoned upon a change in this particular so long as I held an office in the Court of Session. In all my former changes of residence it was from good to better, this is retrograding. I leave this house for sale, and I cease to be an Edinburgh citizen, in the sense of being a proprietor, which my father and I have been for sixty years at least. So farewell, poor 39, and may you never harbour worse people than those who now leave you. Not to desert the *Lares* all at once, Lady S and Anne remain till Sunday. As for me, I go, as aforesaid, this morning

"*“Ha til mi tulidh”*”

Sir Walter's Diary begins to be clouded with a darker species of distress than mere loss of wealth could bring to his spirit. His darling grandson is sinking apace at Brighton. The misfortunes against which his manhood struggled with stern energy were encountered by his affectionate wife under the disadvantages of enfeebled health, and it seems but too evident that mental pain and mortification had a great share in hurrying her ailments to a fatal end.

Nevertheless, all his afflictions do not seem to have interrupted for more than a day or two his usual course of labour. With rare exceptions he appears all through this trying period to have finished his daily task—thirty printed pages of *Woodstock*—until that novel was completed;

or, if he paused in it, he gave a similar space of time to some minor production—such as his paper on Galt's Omen for Blackwood's Magazine, or his very valuable one on the Life of Kemble for the Quarterly Review. And hardly had Woodstock been finished before he began the Chronicles of the Canongate. He also corresponded much as usual (notwithstanding all he says about indolence on that score) with his absent friends, and I need scarcely add that his duties as Sheriff claimed many hours every week.

“Abbotsford, March 15, 9 at night—The naturally unpleasant feelings which influenced me in my ejection, for such it is virtually, readily evaporated in the course of the journey, though I had no pleasanter companions than Mrs Mackay, the housekeeper, and one of the maids, and I have a shyness of disposition, which looks like pride, but is not, which makes me awkward in speaking to my household domestics. With an out-of-doors labourer, or an old woman gathering sticks, I can crack for ever. I was welcomed here on my arrival by the tumult great of men and dogs, all happy to see me. One of my old labourers killed by the fall of a stone working at Gattonside Bridge. Old Will Stratton, my man of wisdom and proverbs, also dead. He was entertaining from his importance and self-conceit, but really a sensible old man. When he heard of my misfortunes, he went to bed, and said he would not rise again, and kept his word. He was very infirm when I last saw him. Tom Purdie in great glory, being released from all farm duty, and destined to attend the woods and be my special assistant.

“March 17—Sent off a packet to J B, only three pages copy, so must work hard for a day or two. I wish I could wind up my bottom handsomely (an odd but accredited phrase), the conclusion will not be luminous, we must try to make it dashing. Have a good deal to do between hands in sorting up, hourly arrival of books. I need not have exulted so soon in having attained ease and quiet. I am robbed of both with a vengeance. A letter from Lockhart. My worst augury is verified: the medical people think poor Johnnie is losing strength, he is gone with his mother to Brighton. The bitterness of this probably impending calamity is extreme. The child was almost too good for this world, beautiful in features, and though spoiled by every one, having one of the sweetest tempers, as well as the quickest intellect, I ever saw, a sense of humour quite extraordinary in a child, and, owing to the general notice which was taken of him, a great deal more information than suited his hours.

“March 19—Lady S, the faithful and true companion of my fortunes, good and bad, for so many years, has, but with difficulty, been prevailed on to see Dr Abercrombie, and his opinion is far from favourable. Her asthmatic complaints are fast terminating in hydropsy, as I have long suspected, yet the announcement of the truth is overwhelming. They are to stay a little longer in town, to try the effects of a new medicine. On Wednesday they propose to return hither—a new affliction, where there was enough before, yet her constitution is so good, that if she will be guided by advice, things may be yet ameliorated. God grant it! for really these misfortunes come too close upon each other.

“March 28—We have now been in solitude for some time,—myself nearly totally so, excepting at meals. One is tempted to ask himself,

knocking at the door of his own heart, Do you love this extreme loneliness? I can answer conscientiously, *I do*. The love of solitude was with me a passion of early youth: when in my teens, I used to fly from company to indulge in visions and airy castles of my own, the disposal of ideal wealth, and the exercise of imaginary power. This feeling prevailed even till I was eighteen, when love and ambition awakening with other passions, threw me more into society, from which I have, however at times withdrawn myself, and have been always even glad to do so. I have risen from a feast satiated; and unless it be one or two persons of very strong intellect, or whose spirits and good-humour amuse me I wish neither to see the high, the low, nor the middling class of society. This is a feeling without the least tinge of misanthropy, which I always consider as a kind of blasphemy of a shocking description. If God bears with the very worst of us, we may surely endure each other. If thrown into society, I always have, and always will endeavour to bring pleasure with me, at least to show willingness to please. But for all this 'I had rather live alone,' and I wish my appointment, so convenient otherwise, did not require my going to Edinburgh. But this must be, and in my little lodging I shall be lonely enough. Reading at intervals a novel called *Granby*, one of the class that aspire to describe the actual current of society, whose colours are so evanescent that it is difficult to fix them on the canvas. It is well written, but over-laboured—too much attempt to put the reader exactly up to the thoughts and sentiments of the parties. The women do this better. Edgeworth, Ferner, Austen, have all given portraits of real society far superior to anything man, vain man, has produced of the like nature.

"April 3.—I have the extraordinary and gratifying news that Woodstock is sold for £3,228; all ready money—a matchless sale for less than three months' work.* If Napoleon does as well, or near it, it will put the trust affairs in high flourish. Four or five years of leisure and industry would, with such success amply replace my losses. I have a curious fancy I will go set two or three acorns, and judge by their success in growing whether I shall succeed in clearing my way or not. I have a little toothache keeps me from working much to-day; besides I sent off, per *Blucher*, copy for Napoleon, as well as the proofs. A blank forenoon! But how could I help it, *Madam Duty*? I was not lazy, on my soul I was not. I did not cry for half-holiday for the sale of Woodstock. But in came Colonel Fergusson with Mrs. Stewart of Blackhall, or hall, or something, and I must show her the garden, pictures, &c. This lasts till one; and just as they are at their lunch, and about to go off, guard is relieved by the Lord and Lady Harden, and Miss Eliza Scott, and my dear Chief, whom I love very much, proving a little obdional or so, remains till three. That same crown composed of the grass which grew on the walls of besieged places, should be offered to visitors who stay above an hour in any sident † person's house. Wrote letters this evening

* The reader will understand that, the novel being sold for the behoof of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors, this sum includes the cost of printing the first edition, as well as paper—

The house of Longman and Co guarantee the sale of Woodstock Also I made up what was due of my task both for 13th and 14th So hey for a Swiftianism—

“‘I loil in my chur,
And around me I stare
With a critical air,
Like a calf at a fair,
And, say I, Mrs Duty,
Good morrow to your beauty,
I kiss your sweet shoe tie,
And hope I can suit ye’

“Fair words butter no parsnips, says Duty, don't keep talking, then, but go to your work again Here is a day's task before you—the Siege of Toulon.—Call you that a task? I'll write it as fast as Boney carried it on.

“April 16—I am now far ahead with Nap Lady Scott seems to make no way A sad prospect! In the evening a despatch from Lord Melville, written with all the familiarity of former times I am very glad of it

“Received £100 from John Lockhart, for review of Pepys, but this is by far too much—£50 is plenty Still ‘I must *impetecos the gratillity*’* for the present Wrote a great many letters Dined with the Judge, where I met the disappointed candidate, Sir J S D, who took my excuse like a gentleman

“May 4—On visiting Lady Scott's sick-room this morning I found her suffering, and I doubt if she knew me Yet, after breakfast, she seemed serene and composed The worst is she will not speak out about the symptoms under which she labours Sad, sad work, I am under the most melancholy apprehension, for what constitution can hold out under these continued and wasting attacks? My niece Anne Scott, a prudent, sensible, and kind young woman, arrived to-day, having come down to assist us in our distress from so far as Cheltenham This is a great consolation. Henry Scott carries the county without opposition.

“May 11—‘Der Abschied's tag est da,
Schwer liegt es auf den Herzen—schwer’†

“Charlotte was unable to take leave of me, being in a sound sleep, after a very indifferent night Perhaps it was as well Emotion might have hurt her, and nothing I could have expressed would have been worth the risk I have foreseen, for two years and more, that this menaced event could not be far distant I have seen plainly, within the last two months, that recovery was hopeless And yet to part with the companion of twenty-nine years when so very ill—that I did not, could not foresee. It withers my heart to think of it, and to recollect that I can hardly hope again to seek confidence and counsel from that ear to which all might be safely confided But in her present lethargic state, what would my

* *The Fifth Night*, Act II, Sc 3

† This is the opening couplet of a German trooper's song The literal translation is—

The day of departure is come,
Heavy lies on the hearts—heavy.

attendance have availed? and Anne has promised close and constant intelligence. I must dine with James Ballantyne to-day *en famille*. I cannot help it, but would rather be at home and alone. However, I can go out too. I will not yield to the barren sense of hopelessness which struggles to invade me.

"*Edinburgh, May 15.*—Received the melancholy intelligence that all is over at Abbotsford.

"*Abbotsford, May 16.*—She died at nine in the morning, after being very ill for two days—easy at last. I arrived here late last night. Anne is worn out, and has had hysterics, which returned on my arrival. Her broken accents were like those of a child, the language as well as the tones broken, but in the most gentle voice of submission 'Poor mamma—never return again—gone for ever—a better place.' Then, when she came to herself, she spoke with sense, freedom, and strength of mind, till her weakness returned. It would have been inexpressibly moving to me as a stranger, what was it then to the father and the husband? For myself, I scarce know how I feel, sometimes as firm as the Bass Rock, sometimes as weak as the water that breaks on it. I am as alert at thinking and deciding as I ever was in my life. Yet, when I contrast what this place now is with what it has been not long since, I think my heart will break. Lonely, aged, deprived of my family—all but poor Anne, an impoverished, an embarrassed man, deprived of the sharer of my thoughts and counsels, who could always talk down my sense of the calamitous apprehensions which break the heart that must bear them alone. Even her foibles were of service to me, by giving me things to think of beyond my weary self-reflections.

"I have seen her. The figure I beheld is and is not my Charlotte—my thirty years' companion. There is the same symmetry of form, though those limbs are rigid which were once so gracefully elastic; but that yellow mask, with pinched features, which seems to mock life rather than emulate it, can it be the face that was once so full of lively expression? I will not look on it again. Anne thinks her little changed, because the latest idea she had formed of her mother is as she appeared under circumstances of extreme pain. Mine go back to a period of comparative ease. If I write long in this way, I shall write down my resolution, which I should rather write up, if I could. I wonder how I shall do with the large portion of thoughts which were hers for thirty years? I suspect they will be hers yet for a long time at least. But I will not blaze cambric and crape in the public eye, like a disconsolate widower, that most affected of all characters.

"*May 18*—Another day, and a bright one to the external world, again opens on us, the air soft, and the flowers smiling, and the leaves glittering. They cannot refresh her to whom mild weather was a natural enjoyment. Cerements of lead and of wood already hold her; cold earth must have her soon. But it is not my Charlotte, it is not the bride of my youth, the mother of my children, that will be laid among the ruins of Dryburgh, which we have so often visited in gaiety and pastime. No, no. She is sentient and conscious of my emotions somewhere—somewhere, *where* we cannot tell; *how* we cannot tell, yet would I not at this moment renounce the mysterious yet certain hope that I shall see her in a better

world, for all that this world can give me. The necessity of this separation, that necessity which rendered it even a relief, that and patience must be my comfort. I do not experience those paroxysms of grief which others do on the same occasion. I can exert myself, and speak even cheerfully with the poor girls. But alone, or if anything touches me, the choking sensation. I have been to her room, there was no voice in it—no stirring, the pressure of the coffin was visible on the bed, but it had been removed elsewhere, all was neat, as she loved it, but all was calm—calm as death. I remembered the last sight of her, she roused herself in bed, and tried to turn her eyes after me, and said, with a sort of smile, 'You all have such melancholy faces.' These were the last words I ever heard her utter, and I hurried away, for she did not seem quite conscious of what she said, when I returned, immediately departing, she was in a deep sleep. It is deeper now. This was but seven days since.

"They are arranging the chamber of death—that which was long the apartment of conjugal happiness, and of whose arrangements (better than in richer houses) she was so proud. They are treading fast and thick. For weeks you could have heard a footfall. Oh, my God!

"*May 19*—Anne, poor love, is ill with her exertions and agitation—cannot walk, and is still hysterical, though less so. I ordered flesh-brush and tepid bath, which I think will bring her about. We speak freely of her whom we have lost, and mix her name with our ordinary conversation. This is the rule of nature. All primitive people speak of their dead, and I think virtuously and wisely. The idea of blotting the names of those who are gone out of the language and familiar discourse of those to whom they were dearest is one of the rules of ultra-civilization which, in so many instances, strangle natural feeling by way of avoiding a painful sensation. The Highlanders speak of their dead children as freely as of their living members, how poor Colin or Robert would have acted in such or such a situation. It is a generous and manly tone of feeling, and, so far as it may be adopted without affectation or contradicting the general habits of society, I reckon on observing it.

"*May 20*—To-night, I trust, will bring Charles, or Lockhart, or both, at least I must hear from them. A letter from Violet Lockhart gave us the painful intelligence that she had not mentioned to Sophia the dangerous state in which her mother was. Most kindly meant, but certainly not so well judged. I have always thought that truth, even when painful, is a great duty on such occasions, and it is seldom that concealment is justifiable. Sophia's baby was christened on Sunday, 14th May, at Brighton, by the name of Walter Scott. May God give him life and health to wear it with credit to himself and those belonging to him. Melancholy to think that the next morning after this ceremony deprived him of so near a relation!

"*May 21*—Our sad preparations for to-morrow continue. A letter from Lockhart, doubtful if Sophia's health will let him be here. If things permit he comes to-night. From Charles not a word, but I think I may expect him. I wish to-morrow were over, not that I fear it, for my nerves are pretty good, but it will be a day of many recollections.

"*May 22*—Charles arrived last night, much affected, of course. Anne had a return of her fainting-fits on seeing him, and again upon seeing

Mr. Ramsey,* the gentleman who performs the service. I heard him do so with the utmost propriety for my late friend, Lady Alvanley, the arrangement of whose funeral devolved upon me. How little I could guess when, where, and with respect to whom I should next hear those solemn words! Well, I am not apt to shrink from that which is my duty, merely because it is painful, but I wish this day over. A kind of cloud of stupidity hangs about me, as if all were unreal that men seem to be doing and talking about—

"*May 23*—About an hour before the mournful ceremony of yesterday Walter arrived, having travelled express from Ireland on receiving the news. He was much affected, poor fellow, and no wonder. Poor Charlotte nursed him, and perhaps for that reason she was over-partial to him. The whole scene floats as a sort of dream before me—the beautiful day, the grey ruins covered and hidden among clouds of foliage and flourish, where the grave, even in the lap of beauty, lay lurking and gaped for its prey. Then the grave looks, the hasty important bustle of men with spades and mattocks—the train of carriages—the coffin containing the creature that was so long the dearest on earth to me, and whom I was to consign to the very spot which in pleasure parties we so frequently visited. It seems still as if this could not be really so. But it is so, and duty to God and to my children must teach me patience. Poor Anne has had longer fits since our arrival from Dryburgh than before, but yesterday was the crisis. She desired to hear prayers read by Mr. Ramsay, who performed the duty in the most solemn manner. But her strength could not carry it through, she fainted before the service was concluded.

"*May 24*—Slept wretchedly, or rather waked wretchedly all night, and was very sick and bilious in consequence, and scarce able to hold up my head with pain. A walk, however, with my sons did me a deal of good, indeed, their society is the greatest support the world can afford me. Their ideas of everything are so just and honourable, kind towards their sisters, and affectionate to me, that I must be grateful to God for sparing them to me, and continue to battle with the world for their sakes, if not for my own.

"*May 25*—I had sound sleep to-night, and waked with little or nothing of the strange dreamy feeling which had made me for some days feel like one bewildered in a country where mist or snow has disguised those features of the landscape which are best known to him. This evening Walter left us, being anxious to return to his wife as well as to his regiment.

"*May 31*—The melancholy horrors of yesterday must not return. To encourage that dreamy state of incapacity is to resign all authority over the mind, and I have been used to say—

"'My mind to me a kingdom is.'

"I am rightful monarch, and, God to aid, I will not be dethroned by any rebellious passion that may rear its standard against me. Such are morning thoughts, strong as carle-hemp, says Burns—

"'Come, firm resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk of carle-hemp in man!'"

* The Rev E B Ramsay, A M Oxon, of the Scottish Episcopal Communion St John's Chapel, Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XXV

WOODSTOCK—UNIFORM LABOUR AT LIFE OF NAPOLÉON—JOURNEY TO
PARIS—AT ABBOTSFORD

THE price received for Woodstock shows what eager competition had been called forth among the booksellers when, after the lapse of several years Constable's monopoly of Sir Walter's novels was abolished by their common calamity. The interest excited not only in Scotland and England, but all over civilized Europe, by the news of Scott's misfortunes, must also have had its influence in quickening this commercial rivalry. The reader need hardly be told that the first meeting of James Ballantyne and Company's creditors witnessed the transformation, a month before darkly prophesied, of the "Great Unknown" into the "Too-well-known." Even for those who had long ceased to entertain any doubt as to the main source at least of the Waverley romances, there would have been something stirring in the first confession of the author, but it in fact included the avowal that he had stood alone in the work of creation, and when the mighty claim came in the same breath with the announcement of personal ruin, the effect on the community of Edinburgh was electrical. He notes his painful anticipation of returning to the Parliament House—*monstrari digito*—as an insolvent. It does not seem even to have occurred to him that when he appeared there the morning after his creditors had heard his confession, there could not be many men in the place but must gaze on his familiar features with a mixture of curiosity, admiration, and sympathy, of which a hero in the moment of victory might have been proud—which might have swelled the heart of a martyr as he was bound to the stake. The universal feeling was, I believe, much what the late amiable and accomplished Earl of Dudley expressed to Mr Morritt when these news reached them at Brighton. "Scott ruined!" said he, "the author of Waverley ruined! Good God, let every man to whom he has given months of delight give him a sixpence, and he will rise to-morrow morning richer than Rothschild!"

It is no wonder that the book, which it was known he had been writing during this crisis of distress, should have been expected with solicitude. Shall we find him, asked thousands, to have been master truly of his genius in the moment of this ordeal? Shall we trace anything of his own experiences in the construction of his imaginary personages and events?

I know not how others interpreted various passages in Woodstock, but there were not a few that carried deep meaning for such of Scott's own friends as were acquainted with, not his pecuniary misfortune alone, but

the drooping health of his wife, and the consolation afforded him by the dutiful devotion of his daughter Anne, in whose character and demeanour a change had occurred exactly similar to that painted in poor Alice Lee — "A light joyous air, with something of a humorous expression, which seemed to be looking for amusement, had vanished before the touch of affliction, and a calm melancholy supplied its place, which seemed on the watch to administer comfort to others." In several *mottos*, and other scraps of verse, the curious reader will find similar traces of the facts and feelings recorded in the author's Diary.

The success of this novel was great large as the price was, its publishers had no reason to repent their bargain, and of course the rapid receipt of such a sum as £8,000, the product of hardly three months' labour, highly gratified the body of creditors, whose debtor had devoted to them whatever labour his health should henceforth permit him to perform. We have seen that he very soon began another work of fiction, and it will appear that he from the first designed the *Chronicles of the Canongate* to be published by Mr Robert Cadell. That gentleman's connection with Constable was, from circumstances of which the reader may have traced various little indications, not likely to be renewed after the catastrophe of their old copartnership. They were now endeavouring to establish themselves in separate businesses, and each was, of course, eager to secure the countenance of Sir Walter. He did not hesitate a moment. He conceived that Constable had acted in such a manner by him, especially in urging him to borrow large sums of money for his support after all chance of recovery was over, that he had more than forfeited all claims on his confidence, and Mr Cadell's frank conduct in warning Ballantyne and him against Constable's last mad proposal about a guarantee for £20,000 had produced a strong impression in his favour.

Sir Walter's Diary has given us some pleasing glimpses of the kind of feeling displayed by Ballantyne towards him, and by him towards Ballantyne during these dark months. In justice to both I shall here insert one of the notes addressed by Scott, while Woodstock was at press, to his critical typographer. It has reference to a request that the success of Malachi Malagrowther might be followed up by a set of essays on Irish Absenteeism in the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*, the editorship of which paper, with the literary management of the printing-house, had been continued to Mr Ballantyne, upon a moderate salary, by his creditors trustees. I may observe that when the general superintendence of the printing-house came into the hands of regular men of business, it was found (notwithstanding the loss of Constable's great employment) a lucrative one. The creditors, after paying James his salary, cleared in one year £1,200 from the concern, which had for many before been a source of nothing but perplexity to its founders. No hints of mutual complaint or recrimination ever dropped from either of the fallen partners. The printer, like Scott, submitted without a murmur of that sort, or indeed of any sort, to his reverses, he withdrew to a very small house in a sequestered suburban situation, and altered all his domestic habits and arrangements with decision and fortitude. Here he received many communications such as the following, —

"North St David Street

"DEAR JAMES,—

"I cannot see to read my manuscript in the way you propose, I would give a thousand pounds I could, but, like the officer of the Customs, when the Board desired him to read a coquet of his own,—I am coquet-*writer*, not coquet-*reader*, and you must be thankful that I can perform even that part of the duty

"We must in some sort stand or fall *together*, and I do not wish you to think that I am forgetting your interest in my own—though I sincerely believe the former is what you least think of. But I am afraid I must decline the political task you invite me to. It would cost me a fortnight's hard work to do anything to purpose, for I have no information on the subject whatever. In short, as the Earl of Essex said on a certain occasion, 'Frankly, it may not be.' I hope next winter will afford me an opportunity to do something, which, as Falstaff says, 'may do you good' Ever yours, "W S"

The date of this note (North St David's Street) reminds me of a passage in Captain Basil Hall's Diary. He called at Mrs Brown's lodging-house one morning, and on his return home wrote as follows.—

"A hundred and fifty years hence, when his works have become old classical authorities, it may interest some fervent lover of his writings to know what this great genius was about on Saturday the 10th of June, 1826—five months after the total ruin of his pecuniary fortunes, and twenty-six days after the death of his wife

"In the days of his good luck he used to live at No 39 in North Castle Street, in a house befitting a rich baronet, but on reaching the door, I found the plate on it covered with rust (so soon is glory obscured), the windows shuttered up, dusty, and comfortless, and from the side of one projected a board, with this inscription, "To Sell," the stairs unwashed, and not a footmark told of the ancient hospitality which reigned within. In all nations with which I am acquainted the fashionable world move westward, in imitation, perhaps, of the great tide of civilization, and, *vice versé*, those persons who decline in fortune, which is mostly equivalent to declining in fashion, shape their course eastward. Accordingly, by an involuntary impulse, I turned my head that way, and inquiring at the clubs in Prince's Street, learned that he now resided in St David Street, No 6

"I was rather glad to recognize my old friend the Abbotsford butler, who answered the door—the saying about heroes and valets-de-chambre comes to one's recollection on such occasions, and nothing, we may be sure, is more likely to be satisfactory to a man whose fortune is reduced than the stanch adherence of a mere servant, whose wages must be altered for the worse. At the top of the stair we saw a small tray, with a single plate and glasses for one solitary person's dinner. Some few months ago Sir Walter was surrounded by his family, and wherever he moved, his head-quarters were the focus of fashion. Travellers from all nations crowded round, and, like the recorded honours of Lord Chatham, 'thickened over him.' Lady and Miss Scott were his constant companions, the Lockharts were his neighbours both in town and in Roxburghshire,

his eldest son was his frequent guest; and in short, what with his own family and the clouds of tourists, who, like so many hordes of Cossacks, pressed upon him, there was not, perhaps, out of a palace, any man so attended, I had almost said overpowered, by company. His wife is now dead—his son-in-law and favourite daughter gone to London, and his grandchild, I fear, just staggering, poor little fellow, on the edge of the grave, which, perhaps, is the securist refuge for him—his eldest son is married and at a distance, and report speaks of no probability of the title descending, in short, all are dispersed, and the tourists, those ‘*curiosos imperitinentes*,’ drive past Abbotsford gate, and curse their folly in having delayed for a year too late their long-projected jaunt to the north * * *

“Sir Walter Scott, then, was sitting at a writing-desk covered with papers, and on the top was a pile of bound volumes of the *Moniteur*,—one, which he was leaning over as my brother and I entered, was open on a chair, and two others were lying on the floor. As he rose to receive us he closed the volume which he had been extracting from, and came forward to shake hands. He was, of course, in deep mourning, with weepers and the other trappings of woe, but his countenance, though certainly a little woebegonish, was not cast into any very deep furrows. His tone and manner were as friendly as heretofore, and when he saw that we had no intention of making any attempt at sympathy or commiseration, but spoke to him as of old, he gradually contracted the length of his countenance, and allowed the corners of his mouth to curl almost imperceptibly upwards, and a renewed lustre came into his eye, if not exactly indicative of cheerfulness, at all events of well-regulated, patient, Christian resignation. My meaning will be misunderstood if it be imagined from this picture that I suspected any hypocrisy or an affectation of grief in the first instance. I have no doubt, indeed, that he feels, and most acutely, the bereavements which have come upon him, but we may very fairly suppose that, among the many visitors he must have, there may be some who cannot understand that it is proper, decent, or even possible to hide those finer emotions deep in the heart. He immediately began conversing in his usual style—the chief topic being Captain Denham (whom I had recently seen in London), and his book of African Travels, which Sir Walter had evidently read with much attention * * * After sitting a quarter of an hour, we came away, well pleased to see our friend quite unbroken in spirit—and though bowed down a little by the blast, and here and there a branch the less, as sturdily in the trunk as ever, and very possibly all the better for the discipline—better, I mean, for the public, inasmuch as he has now a vast additional stimulus for exertion, and one which all the world must admit to be thoroughly noble and generous.”

A week before this visit took place, Sir Walter had sufficiently mastered himself to resume his literary tasks, and he thenceforth worked with determined resolution on the *Life of Napoleon*, interlaying a day or two of the *Chronicles of the Canongate*, whenever he had got before the press with his historical MS, or felt the want of the only repose he ever cared for—a change of labour.

EXTRACTS FROM DIARY

"June 9—Corrected a stubborn proof this morning. These battles have been the death of many a man, I think they will be mine. Well, but it clears to windward, so we will fag on. Slept well last night. By the way, how intolerably selfish this journal makes me seem—so much attention to one's naturals and non-naturals! Lord Mackenzie called, and we had much chat about parish business.

"June 12—Finished volume third of Napoleon. I resumed it on the 1st of June, the earliest period that I could bend my mind to it after my great loss. Since that time I have lived, to be sure, the life of a hermit, except attending the Court five days in the week for about three hours on an average. Except at that time I have been reading or writing on the subject of Boney, and have finished last night, and sent to printer this morning the last sheet of fifty-two written since 1st June. It is an awful sereed, but grief makes me a housekeeper, and to labour is my only resource.

"June 23—I received to-day £10 from Blackwood for the article on The Omen. Time was I would not have taken these small tithes of mint and cummin, but scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings, and I, with many depending on me, must do the best I can with my time, God help me.

"July 17—*Desidera tandem valedixi*—Our time is like our money. When we change a guinea, the shillings escape as things of small account; when we break a day by idleness in the morning, the rest of the hours lose their importance in our eye. I set stoutly about seven this morning to Boney—

And long ere dinner time, I have
Full eight close pages wrote,
What, Duty, hast thou now to crave?
Well done, Sir Walter Scott!

"September 12—I begin to fear Nap will swell to seven volumes. I had a long letter from James B., threatening me with eight, but that is impossible. The event of his becoming Emperor is the central point of his history. Now I have just attained it, and it is the centre of the third volume. Two volumes and a half may be necessary to complete the whole. As I slept for a few minutes in my chair, to which I am more addicted than I could wish, I heard, as I thought, my poor wife call me by the familiar name of fondness which she gave me. My recollections on waking were melancholy enough. These be

"The airy tongues that syllable men's names"

"All, I believe, have some natural desire to consider these unusual impressions as bodements of good or evil to come. But alas! this is a prejudice of our own conceit. They are the empty echoes of what is past, not the foreboding voice of things to come.

"Abbotsford, September 29—A sort of zeal of working has seized me, which I must avail myself of. No dejection of mind and no tremor of nerves, for which God be humbly thanked. My spirits are neither low nor high—grave, I think, and quiet—a complete twilight of the mind. I wrote five pages, nearly a double task, yet wandered for three hours,

axe in hand, superintending the thinning of the home planting. That does good too. I feel it gives steadiness to my mind. Women, it is said, go mad much seldomer than men. I fancy, if this be true, it is in some degree owing to the little manual works in which they are constantly employed, which regulate in some degree the current of ideas, as the pendulum regulates the motion of the timepiece. I do not know if this is sense or nonsense, but I am sensible that if I were in solitary confinement, without either the power of taking exercise or employing myself in study, six months would make me a madman or an idiot.

"October 3—I wrote my task as usual, but, strange to tell, there is a want of paper. I expect some to-day. In the meantime, to avoid all quarrel with Dame Duty, I cut up some other leaves into the usual statutory size. They say of a fowl that if you draw a chalk line on a table, and lay chuck-a-diddle down with his bill upon it, the poor thing will imagine himself opposed by an insurmountable barrier, which he will not attempt to cross. Suchlike are one-half of the obstacles which serve to interrupt our best resolves, and such is my pretended want of paper. It is like Sterne's want of *sous*, when he went to relieve the *Pauvre Honteux*.

"October 5—I was thinking this morning that my time glided away in a singularly monotonous manner, like one of those dark grey days which neither promise sunshine nor threaten rain, too melancholy for enjoyment, too tranquil for repining. But this day has brought a change which somewhat shakes my philosophy. I find, by a letter from J Gibson, that I *may* go to London without danger, and if I may, I in a manner *must*, to examine the papers in the Secretary of State's office about Buonaparte when at St Helena. The opportunity having been offered must be accepted, and yet I had much rather stay at home. Even the prospect of seeing Sophia and Lockhart must be mingled with pain, yet this is foolish too. Lady Hamilton* writes me that Pozzo di Borgo, the Russian Minister at Paris, is willing to communicate to me some particulars of Buonaparte's early life. Query—might I not go on there? In for a penny, in for a pound. I intend to take Anne with me, and the pleasure will be great to her, who deserves much at my hand.

"October 9.—A gracious letter from Messrs Abud and Son, bill-brokers, &c, assure my trustees that they will institute no legal proceedings against me for four or five weeks. And so I am permitted to spend my money and my time to improve the means of paying them their debts, for that is the only use of this journey. They are Jews, I suppose the devil baits for Jews with a pork griskin. Were I not to exert myself, I wonder where their money is to come from?

"October 10—I must prepare for going to London, and perhaps to Paris. I have great unwillingness to set out on this journey, I almost think it ominous, but

"They that look to freits, my master dear,
Their freits will follow them."

"I am down-hearted about leaving all my things, after I was quietly

* Lady Jane Hamilton Dalrymple, the eldest daughter of the illustrious Admiral Lord Duncan. Her ladyship's kindness procured several valuable communications to the author of the *Life of Buonaparte*.

settled, it is a kind of disrooting that recalls a thousand painful ideas of former happier journeys. And to be at the mercy of these fellows—God help—but rather God bless—man must help himself.

"October 11—We are ingenious self-tormentors. This journey annoys me more than anything of the kind in my life. My wife's figure seems to stand before me, and her voice is in my ears—'Scott, do not go.' It half frightens me. Strange throbbing at my heart, and a disposition to be very sick. It is just the effect of so many feelings which had been lulled asleep by the uniformity of my life, but which awaken on any new subject of agitation. Poor, poor Charlotte! I cannot daub it further. I get incapable of arranging my papers too. I will go out for half an hour. God relieve me!"

On the 12th of October, Sir Walter left Abbotsford for London, where he had been promised access to the papers in the Government offices, and thence he proceeded to Paris, in the hope of gathering from various eminent persons authentic views and anecdotes concerning the career of Napoleon.

"25 Pall Mall, October 17—Here am I in this capital once more, after an April-weather meeting with my daughter and Lockhart. Too much grief in our first meeting to be joyful, too much pleasure to be distressing, a giddy sensation between the painful and the pleasurable. I will call another subject.

"I read with interest during my journey Sir John Chiverton and Brambletye House—novels, in what I may surely claim as the style

"'Which I was born to introduce—
Refined it first, and showed its use'."

"They are both clever books—one in imitation of the days of chivalry, the other (by Horace Smith, one of the authors of *Rejected Addresses*) dated in the time of the Civil Wars, and introducing historical characters.

"I believe, were I to publish the *Canongate Chronicles* without my name (*nomme de guerre*, I mean), the event might be a corollary to the fable of the peasant who made the real pig squeak against the imitator, when the sapient audience killed the poor grunter as if inferior to the biped in his own language. The peasant could, indeed, confute the long-eared multitude by showing piggy, but were I to fail as a knight with a white and maiden shield, and then vindicate my claim to attention by putting 'By the Author of *Waverley*' in the title, my good friend *Publicum* would defend itself by stating I had tilted so ill that my course had not the least resemblance to former doings, when indisputably I bore away the gailand. Therefore I am firmly and resolutely determined to tilt under my own cognizance.

"October 19—Breakfast at Sam Rogers's with Sir Thomas Lawrence, Luttrell, the great London wit, Richard Sharp, &c. One of them made merry with some part of *Rose's Ariosto*, proposed that the Italian should be printed on the other side, for the sake of assisting the indolent reader to understand the English, and complained of his using more than once

the phrase of a lady having 'voided her saddle,' which would certainly sound extraordinary at Apothecaries' Hall. Well, well, Rose carries a dirk too. The morning was too dark for Westminster Abbey, which we had projected.

"I then went to Downing Street, and am put by Mr Wilmot Horton into the hands of a confidential clerk, Mr Smith, who promises access to everything. Then saw Croker, who gave me a bundle of documents. Sir George Cockburn promises his despatches and journal. In short, I have ample prospect of materials. Dined with Mrs Coutts. Tragically distressed of my good friend on the marriage of her presumptive heir with a daughter of Lucien Bonaparte.

"October 20—Commanded down to pass a day at Windsor. This is very kind of His Majesty. At breakfast, Crofton Croker, author of the *Irish Fairy Tales*—little as a dwarf, keen-eyed as a hawk, and of easy, prepossessing manners. Something like Tom Moore. Here were also Perry, Allan Cunningham, Newton, and others. Now I must go to work. Went down to Windsor, or rather to the Lodge in the Forest, which, though ridiculed by connoisseurs, seems to be no bad specimen of a royal retirement, and is delightfully situated. A kind of cottage, too large perhaps for the style, but yet so managed that in the walks you only see parts of it at once, and these well composed and grouping with the immense trees. His Majesty received me with the same mixture of kindness and courtesy which has always distinguished his conduct towards me. There was no company besides the royal retinue—Lady Conyngham, her daughter, and two or three other ladies. After a left table there was excellent music by the royal band, who lay ambushed in a greenhouse adjoining the apartment. The King made me sit beside him, and talk a great deal—*too much*, perhaps—for he has the art of raising one's spirits, and making you forget the *retinue* which is prudent everywhere, especially at Court. But he converses himself with so much ease and elegance, that you lose thoughts of the prince in admiring the well-bred and accomplished gentleman. He is in many respects the model of a British monarch, has little inclination to try experiments on Government otherwise than through his Ministers, sincerely, I believe, desires the good of his subjects, is kind towards the distressed, and moves and speaks 'every inch a king.' I am sure such a man is fitter for us than one who would long to head armies, or be perpetually intermeddling with *la grande politique*. A sort of reserve, which creeps on him daily, and prevents his going to places of public resort, is a disadvantage, and prevents his being so generally popular as is earnestly to be desired. This, I think, was much increased by the behaviour of the rabble in the brutal insanity of the Queen's trial, when John Bull, meaning the best in the world, made such a beastly figure.

"October 21—Walked in the morning with Sir William Knighton, and had much confidential chat, not fit to be here set down, in case of accidents. He undertook most kindly to recommend Charles, when he has taken his degree, to be attached to some of the diplomatic missions, which I think is best for the lad, after all. After breakfast went to Windsor Castle, and examined the improvements going on there under Mr Wyattville, who appears to possess a great deal of taste and feeling.

for Gothic architecture. The old apartments, splendid enough in extent and proportion, are paltry in finishing. Instead of being lined with heart of oak, the palace of the British King is hung with paper painted wainscot colour. There are some fine paintings, and some droll ones. Among the last are those of divers princes of the house of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, of which Queen Charlotte was descended. They are ill-coloured, ourang-outang looking figures, with black eyes and hook noses, in old-fashioned uniforms. Returned to a hasty dinner in Pall Mall, and then hurried away to see honest Dan Terry's theatre, called the Adelphi, where we saw the Pilot, from an American novel of that name. It is extremely popular, the dramatist having seized on the whole story, and turned the odious and ridiculous parts, assigned by the original author to the British, against the Yankees themselves. There is a quiet effrontery in this that is of a rare and peculiar character. The Americans were so much displeased that they attempted a row, which rendered the piece doubly attractive to the seamen at Wapping, who came up and crowded the house night after night to support the honour of the British flag. After all, one must deprecate whatever keeps up ill-will betwixt America and the mother country, and *we* in particular should avoid awakening painful recollections.

"October 23—Sam Rogers and Moore breakfasted here, and we were very merry fellows. Moore seemed disposed to go to France with us. I foresee I shall be embarrassed with more communications than I can use or trust to, coloured as they must be by the passions of those who make them. Thus I have a statement from the Duchess d'Escars, to which the Buonapartists would, I dare say, give no credit. If Talleyrand, for example, could be communicative, he must have ten thousand reasons for perverting the truth, and yet a person receiving a direct communication from him would be almost barred from disputing it.

"Sing, tantarary, rogues all."

"We dined at the Residentiary-house with good Dr Hughes—Allan Cunningham, Sir Thomas Lawrence, and young Mr Hughes. Thomas Pringle is returned from the Cape. He might have done well there, could he have scoured his brains of politics, but he must needs publish a Whig journal at the Cape of Good Hope! He is a worthy creature, but conceited withal—*hinc illa lachryma*! He brought me some antlers and a skin, in addition to others he had sent to Abbotsford four years since.

"October 24—Laboured in the morning. At breakfast, Dr Holland, and Cohen, whom they now call Palgrave, a mutation of names which confused my recollections. Item, Moore. I worked at the Colonial Office pretty hard. Dined with Mr Wilmot Horton, and his beautiful wife, the original of the 'She walks in beauty,' &c., of poor Byron—N.B. The conversation is seldom excellent among official people. So many topics are what Otahetians call *taboo*. We hunted down a pun or too, which were turned out, like the stag at the Epping Hunt, for the pursuit of all and sundry. Came home early, and was in bed by eleven.

"Calais, October 26—Up at five, and in the packet by six. A fine passage—save at the conclusion, while we lay on and off the harbour of

Calais But the tossing made no impression on my companion or me, we ate and drank like dragoons the whole way, and were able to manage a good supper and best part of a bottle of Chablis, at the classic Dessem's, who received us with much courtesy * * *

"In Paris, November 4, 1826 — After ten I went with Annet to the Tuileries, where we saw the royal family pass through the Glass Gallery as they went to chapel. We were very much looked at in our turn, and the King, on passing out, did me the honour to say a few civil words, which produced a great sensation. Madame la Dauphine and Madame de Berri curtsied, smiled, and looked extremely gracious, and smiles, bows, and curtsies rained on us like odours, from all the courtiers and ladies of the train. We were conducted by an officer of the Royal Gardes du Corps to a convenient place in the chapel, where we had the pleasure of hearing the mass performed with excellent music.

"I had a perfect view of the royal family. The King is the same in age as I knew him in youth at Holyrood House,—*debonnaire* and courteous in the highest degree. Mad Dauphine resembles very much the prints of Maria Antoinette, in the profile especially. She is not, however, beautiful, her features being too strong, but they announce a great deal of character, and the Princess whom Buonaparte used to call the *man* of the family. She seemed very attentive to her devotions. The Duchess of Berri seemed less immersed in the ceremony, and yawned once or twice. She is a lively-looking blonde, looks as if she were good-humoured and happy, by no means pretty, and has a cast with her eyes, splendidly adorned with diamonds, however. After this gave Mad Mirbel a sitting, where I encountered a general officer, her uncle, who was *chef de l'état major* to Buonaparte. He was very communicative, and seemed an interesting person, by no means over-much prepossessed in favour of his late master, whom he judged impartially, though with affection. We came home and dined in quiet, having refused all temptations to go out in the evening, this on Anne's account as well as my own. It is not quite gospel, though Solomon says it—The eye can be tired with seeing, whatever he may allege on the contrary. And then there are so many compliments. I wish for a little of the old Scotch causticity. I am something like the bee that sips treacle.

"November 5—I believe I must give up my journal till I leave Paris. The French are literally outrageous in their civilities, bounce in at all hours, and drive one half mad with compliments. I am ungracious not to be so entirely thankful as I ought to this kind and merry people. We breakfasted with Mad Mirbel, where were the Dukes of Fitz-James and Duras, &c, &c, goodly company, but all's one for that. I made rather an impatient sitter, wishing to talk much more than was agreeable to Madame. Afterwards we went to the Champs Elysées, where a balloon was let off and all sorts of frolics performed for the benefit of the *bons gens de Paris*, besides stuffing them with victuals. I wonder how such a civic festival would go off in London or Edinburgh, or especially in Dublin. To be sure, they would not introduce their shillelahs! But, in the classic taste of the French, there were no such gladiatorial doings. To be sure, they have a natural good-humour and gaiety which inclines them to be pleased with themselves, and everything about them. We

dined at the Ambassador's, where was a large party—Lord Morpeth, the Duke of Devonshire, and others, all very kind Pozzo di Borgo there, and disposed to be communicative. A large *souée* Home at eleven These hours are early, however

"November 6—Cooper came to breakfast, but we were *obsédés partout* Such a number of Frenchmen bounced in successively and exploded (I mean discharged) their compliments, that I could hardly find an opportunity to speak a word, or entertain Mr. Cooper at all After this we sat again for our portraits Mad Mirbel took care not to have any one to divert my attention, but I contrived to amuse myself with some masons finishing a *façade* opposite to me, who placed their stones, not like Inigo Jones, but in the most lubberly way in the world, with the help of a large wheel, and the application of strength of hand John Smith of Darnick, and two of his men, would have done more with a block and pulley than the whole score of them The French seem far behind in machinery We are almost eaten up with kindness, but that will have its end I have had to parry several presents of busts, and so forth The funny thing was the airs of my little friend. We had a most affectionate parting—wet, wet cheeks on the lady's side Pebble-hearted, and shed as few tears as Crab of doggish memory *

"Went to Galignani's, where the brothers, after some palaver, offered £105 for the sheets of Napoleon, to be reprinted at Paris in English I told them I would think of it I suppose Trenttel and Wurtz had apprehended something of this kind, for they write me that they had made a bargain with my publisher (Cadell, I suppose) for the publishing of my book in all sorts of ways I must look into this

"Dined with Marshal Macdonald † and a splendid party, amongst others, Marshal Marmont—middle size, stout made, dark complexion, and looks sensible The French hate him much for his conduct in 1814, but it is only making him the scapegoat Also I saw Mons de Molt, but especially the Marquis de Lauriston, who received me most kindly He is personally like my cousin, Colonel Russell I learned that his brother, Louis Law, my old friend, was alive, and the father of a large family I was most kindly treated, and had my vanity much flattered by the men who had acted such important parts talking to me in the most frank manner

"In the evening to Princess Galitzin, where were a whole covey of Princesses of Russia arrayed in *tartan*, with music and singing to boot The person in whom I was most interested was Mad de Boufflers, upwards of eighty, very polite, very pleasant, and with all the acquirements of a French Court lady of the time of Mad Sevigné, or of the correspondent rather of Horace Walpole Cooper was there, so the Scotch and American lions took the field together Home, and settled our affairs to depart

"November 7—Off at seven—breakfasted at Beauvais, and pushed on to Amiens. This being a forced march, we had bad lodgings, wet wood, uncomfortable supper, damp beds, and an extravagant charge I was

* See the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act II, Scene 3

† The Marshal had visited Scotland in 1825, and the Diarist then saw a good deal of him under the roof of his kinsman, Mr Macdonald Buchanan

never colder in my life than when I waked with the sheets clinging around me like a shroud.

"November 8.—We started at six in the morning, having no need to be called twice, so heartily was I weary of my comfortless couch. Breakfasted at Abbeville—then pushed on to Boulogne, expecting to find the packet ready to start next morning, and so to have had the advantage of the easterly tide. But, lo ye! the packet was not to sail till next day. So, after shrugging our shoulders—being the solace *à la mode de France*—and recruiting ourselves with a pullet and a bottle of Chablis, *à la mode d'Angleterre*, we set off for Calais after supper, and it was betwixt three and four in the morning before we got to Dessein's, when the house was full or reported to be so. We could only get two wretched brick-paved garrets, as cold and moist as those of Amiens, instead of the comforts which we were received with at our arrival*. But I was better prepared. Stripped off the sheets, and lay down in my dressing-gown, and so roughed it out—*tant bien que mal*.

"November 9.—At four in the morning we were called—at six we got on board the packet, where I found a sensible and conversible man, a very pleasant circumstance. At Dover Mr Ward came with the lieutenant-governor of the castle, and wished us to visit that ancient fortress. I regretted much that our time was short, and the weather did not admit of our seeing views, so we could only thank the gentlemen in declining their civility. The castle, partly ruinous, seems to have been very fine. The cliff, to which Shakespeare gave his immortal name, is, as all the world knows, a great deal lower than his description implies. Our Dover friends, justly jealous of the reputation of their cliff, impute this diminution of its consequence to its having fallen in repeatedly since the poet's time. I think it more likely that the imagination of Shakespeare, writing perhaps at a period long after he may have seen the rock, had described it such as he conceived it to have been. Besides, Shakespeare was born in a flat country, and Dover Cliff is at least lofty enough to have suggested the exaggerated features to his fancy. At all events, it has maintained its reputation better than the Tarpeian Rock—no man could leap from it and live. Left Dover after a hot luncheon about four o'clock, and reached London at half-past three in the morning. So adieu to *la belle France*, and welcome merry England.

"*Pall Mall, November 10*—Ere I leave *la belle France*, however, it is fit I should express my gratitude for the unwontedly kind reception which I met with at all hands. It would be an unworthy piece of affectation did I not allow that I have been pleased—highly pleased—to find a species of literature intended only for my own country, has met such an extensive and favourable reception in a foreign land, where there was so much *à priori* to oppose its progress. For my work I think I have done a good deal; but, above all, I have been confirmed strongly in the impressions I had previously formed of the character of Nap., and may attempt to draw him with a firmer hand.

"The succession of new people and unusual incidents has had a favourable effect on my mind, which was becoming rutted like an ill kept highway.

* A room in Dessein's Hotel is now inscribed "*Chambre de Walter Scott*"—another has long been marked "*Chambre de Sterne*."

My thoughts have for some time flowed in another and pleasanter channel than through the melancholy course into which my solitary and deprived state had long driven them, and which gave often pain to be endured without complaint and without sympathy. 'For this relief,' as Marcellus says in Hamlet, 'much thanks.'

"To-day I visited the public offices, and prosecuted my researches. Left inquiries for the Duke of York, who has recovered from a most desperate state. His legs had been threatened with mortification, but he was saved by a critical discharge. Also visited the Duke of Wellington, Lord Melville, and others, besides the ladies in Piccadilly. Dined and spent the evening quietly in Pall Mall.

"November 11—Croker came to breakfast, and we were soon after joined by Theodore Hook, *alias (on dit)* John Bull. He has got as fat as the actual monarch of the herd. Lockhart sat still with us, and we had, as Gil Blas says, a delicious morning, spent in abusing our neighbours, at which my three neighbours are no novices any more than I am myself, though (like Puss in Boots, who only caught mice for his amusement), I am only a chamber counsel in matters of scandal. The fact is, I have refrained, as much as human frailty will permit, from all satirical composition. Here is an ample subject for a little black-balling in the case of Joseph Hume, the great accountant, who has managed the Greek loan so egregiously. I do not lack personal provocation yet I won't attack him—at present, at least—but *qu'il se garde de moi*.

"'I'm not a king, nor nae sic thing,
My word it may not stand,
But Joseph may a buffet bide,
Come he beneath my brand',

"At dinner we had a little blow-out on Sophia's part. Lord Dudley, Mr Hay, Under-Secretary of State, Sir Thomas Lawrence, &c. *Mistress*, as she now calls herself, Joanna Bailie, and her sister, came in the evening. The whole went off pleasantly.

"November 12—Went to sit to Sir T. L. to finish the picture for His Majesty, which every one says is a very fine one. I think so myself, and wonder how Sir Thomas has made so much out of an old weatherbeaten block. But I believe the hard features of old Dons like myself are more within the compass of the artist's skill than the lovely face and delicate complexion of females. Came home after a heavy shower.

"November 13—I consider Charles's business as settled by a private intimation which I had to that effect from Sir W. K., so I need negotiate no further, but wait the event. Breakfasted at home, and somebody with us, but the whirl of visits so great that I have already forgot the party. Lockhart and I dined at an official person's, where there was a little too much of that sort of flippant wit, or rather smartness, which becomes the parochial Joe Miller of boards and offices. You must not be grave, because it might lead to improper discussions, and to laugh without a joke is a hard task. Your professed wags are treasures to this species of company. Gil Blas was right in eschewing the literary society of his friend Fabricio; but nevertheless one or two of the mess could greatly have improved the conversation of his *Commis*.

"November 14—We breakfasted at honest Allan Cunningham's—

honest Allan—a leal and true Scotsman of the old cast. A man of genius besides, who only requires the tact of knowing when and where to stop, to attain the universal praise which ought to follow it. I look upon the alteration of 'It's hame and it's hame,' and 'A wet sheet and a flowing sea,' as among the best songs going. His prose has often admirable passages, but he is obscure, and overlays his meaning, which will not do nowadays, when he who runs must read.

"Dined at Croker's at Kensington, with his family, the Speaker, and the facetious Theodore Hook.

"We came away rather early, that Anne and I might visit Mrs Arbuthnot to meet the Duke of Wellington. In all my life I never saw him better. He has a dozen of campaigns in his body, and tough ones. Anne was delighted with the frank manners of this unequalled pride of British war, and me he received with all his usual kindness. He talked away about Buonaparte, Russia, and France.

"November 15.—I went to the Colonial Office, where I laboured hard. Dined with the Duke of Wellington. Anne could not look enough at the *vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*. The party were Mr and Mrs Peel, and Mr and Mrs. Arbuthnot, Vesey Fitzgerald, Banks, and Croker, with Lady Bathurst and Lady Georgina. One gentleman took much of the conversation, and gave us, with unnecessary emphasis and at superfluous length, his opinion of a late gambling transaction.

"November 16.—Breakfasted with Rogers, with my daughters and Lockhart. R. was exceedingly entertaining in his dry, quiet, sarcastic manner. At eleven to the Duke of Wellington, who gave me a bundle of remarks on Buonaparte's Russian campaign, written in his carriage during his late mission to St Petersburg. It is furiously scrawled, and the Russian names hard to distinguish, but it *shall* do me yeoman's service. Thence I passed to the Colonial Office, where I concluded my extracts. Lockhart and I dined with Croker at the Admiralty *au grand couvert*. No less than five Cabinet Ministers were present—Canning, Huskisson, Melville, Peel, and Wellington—with sub-secretaries by the bushel. The cheer was excellent, but the presence of too many men of distinguished rank and power always freezes the conversation. Each lamp shines brightest when placed by itself; when too close they neutralize each other*.

"November 17.—Sir John Malcolm at breakfast. Saw the Duke of York. The change on H R H is most wonderful. From a big, burly, stout man, with a thuck and sometimes an inarticulate mode of speaking, he has sunk into a thin-faced, slender-looking old man, who seems diminished in his very size. I could hardly believe I saw the same person, though I was received with his usual kindness. He speaks much more distinctly than formerly, his complexion is clearer, in short, H R H seems, on the whole, more healthy after this crisis than when in the stall-fed state, for such it seemed to be, in which I remember him. God grant it, his life is of infinite value to the King and country—it is a breakwater behind the throne.

"November 18.—Was introduced by Rogers to Mad. D'Arblay, the

* In returning from this dinner Sir Walter said, "I have seen some of these great men at the same table for the last time."

celebrated authoress of *Evelina* and *Cecilia*—an elderly lady, with no remains of personal beauty, but with a simple and gentle manner, a pleasing expression of countenance, and apparently quick feelings. She told me she had wished to see two persons—myself, of course, being one, the other George Canning. This was really a compliment to be pleased with—a nice little handsome pat of butter made up by a neat-handed Phillis of a dairymaid, instead of the grease, fit only for cart-wheels, which one is dosed with by the pound.

"Mad D'Arblay told us that the common story of Dr Burney, her father, having brought home her own first work, and recommended it to her perusal, was erroneous. Her father was in the secret of *Evelina* being printed. But the following circumstances may have given rise to the story.—Dr Burney was at Streatham soon after the publication, where he found Mrs. Thrale recovering from her confinement, low at the moment, and out of spirits. While they were talking together, Johnson, who sat beside in a kind of reverie, suddenly broke out, 'You should read this new work, madam—you should read *Evelina*, every one says it is excellent, and they are right.' The delighted father obtained a commission from Mrs. Thrale to purchase his daughter's work, and retired the happiest of men. Mad D'Arblay said she was wild with joy at this decisive evidence of her literary success, and that she could only give vent to her rapture by dancing and skipping round a mulberry-tree in the garden. She was very young at this time. I trust I shall see this lady again.

"Dined at Mr. Peel's with Lord Liverpool, Duke of Wellington, Croker, &c. The conversation very good, Peel taking the lead in his own house, which he will not do elsewhere. * * * Should have been at the play, but sat too long at Peel's. So ends my campaign amongst these magnificoes and potent seigniors, with whom I have found, as usual, the warmest acceptance.

"*November 20*—I ended this morning my sittings to Lawrence, and am heartily sorry there should be another picture of me except that which he has finished. The person is remarkably like, and conveys the idea of the stout blunt carle that cares for few things and fears nothing. He has represented the author as in the act of composition, yet has effectually discharged all affectation from the manner and attitude. He dined with us at Peel's yesterday, where, by the way, we saw the celebrated Chapeau de Paille, which is not a Chapeau de Paille at all. I also saw this morning the Duke of Wellington and the Duke of York, the former so communicative, that I regretted extremely the length of time,* but have agreed on a correspondence with him. *Trop d'honneur pour moi.* The Duke of York seems still mending, and spoke of state affairs as a high Tory. Were his health good, his spirit is as strong as ever. H R H. has a devout horror of the Liberals. Having the Duke of Wellington, the Chancellor, and perhaps a still greater person on his side, he might make a great fight when they split, as split they will. But Canning, Huskisson, and a mitigated party of Liberaux will probably beat them. Canning's wit and eloquence are almost invincible. But then the Church,

* Sir Walter no doubt means that he regretted not having seen the Duke at an earlier period of his historical labours.

justly alarmed for their property, which is plainly struck at, and the bulk of the landed interest, will scarce brook even a mild infusion of Whiggery into the Administration. Well, time will show

"We visited our friends Peel, Lord Gwydir, Mr Arbuthnot, &c, and left our tickets of adieu. In no instance, during my former visits to London, did I ever meet with such general attention and respect on all sides

"Lady Louisa Stuart dined—also Wright and Mr and Mrs Christie Dr and Mrs Hughes came in the evening, so ended pleasantly our last night in London.

"*Oxford, November 20*—Left London after a comfortable breakfast, and an adieu to the Lockhart family. If I had had but comfortable hopes of their poor, pale, prostrate child, so clever and so interesting, I should have parted easily on this occasion, but these misgivings overcloud the prospect. We reached Oxford by six o'clock, and found Charles and his friend, young Surtees, waiting for us, with a good fire in the chimney, and a good dinner ready to be placed on the table. We had struggled through a cold, sulky, drizzly day, which deprived of all charms even the beautiful country near Henley. So we came from cold and darkness into light and warmth and society. *N.B.*—We had neither daylight nor moonlight to see the view of Oxford from the Maudlin Bridge, which I used to think one of the most beautiful in the world.

"The expense of travelling has mounted high. I am too old to rough it and scrub it, nor could I have saved fifty pounds by doing so. I have gained, however, in health and spirits, in a new stock of ideas, new combinations, and new views. My self-consequence is raised, I hope not unduly, by the many flattering circumstances attending my reception in the two capitals, and I feel confident in proportion. In Scotland I shall find time for labour and for economy.

"*Cheltenham, November 21*—Breakfasted with Charles in his chambers at Brazenose, where he had everything very neat. How pleasant it is for a father to sit at his child's board! It is like the aged man reclining under the shadow of the oak which he has planted. My poor plant has some storms to undergo, but were this expedition conducive to no more than his entrance into life under suitable auspices, I should consider the toil and the expense well bestowed. We then sallied out to see the lions. Remembering the ecstatic feelings with which I visited Oxford more than twenty-five years since, I was surprised at the comparative indifference with which I revisited the same scenes. Reginald Heber, then composing his prize poem, and imping his wings for a long flight of honourable distinction, is now dead in a foreign land, Hodgson and other able men all entombed. The towers and halls remain, but the voices which fill them are of modern days. Besides, the eye becomes saturated with sights, as the full soul loathes the honeycomb. I admired indeed, but my admiration was void of the enthusiasm which I formerly felt. I remember particularly having felt, while in the Bodleian, like the Persian magician who visited the enchanted library in the bowels of the mountain, and willingly suffered himself to be enclosed in its recesses, while less eager sages retired in alarm.

"*Nov. 22*—Breakfasted and dined with Mrs Scott, and leaving Chel-

tenham at seven, pushed on to Worcester to sleep Nov 23 — Breakfasted at Birmingham and slept at Macclesfield. As we came in between ten and eleven, the people of the inn expressed surprise at our travelling so late, as the general distress of the manufacturers has rendered many of the lower classes desperately outrageous Nov 24. — Breakfasted at Manchester, pressed on, and by dint of exertion reached Kendal to sleep, thus getting out of the region of the stern, sullen, unwashed artificers, whom you see lounging sulkily along the streets in Lancashire God's justice is requiting, and will yet further requite, those who have blown up this country into a state of unsubstantial opulence at the expense of the health and morals of the lower classes

"*Abbotsford, November 26* — Consulting my purse, found my good £60 diminished to quarter less ten. In purse, £8 Naturally reflected how much expense has increased since I first travelled My uncle's servant, during the jaunts we made together while I was a boy, used to have his option of a shilling per diem for board wages, and usually preferred it to having his charges borne A servant nowadays to be comfortable on the road should have 4s or 4s 6d board wages, which, before 1790, would have maintained his master But if this be pitiful, it is still more so to find the alteration in my own temper When young, on returning from such a trip as I have just had, my mind would have loved to dwell on all I had seen that was rich and rare, or have been placing, perhaps, in order, the various additions with which I had supplied my stock of information, and now, like a stupid boy blundering over an arithmetical question half obliterated on his slate, I go stumbling on upon the audit of pounds, shillings, and pence Well, the skirmish has cost me £200 I wished for information,—and I have had to pay for it"

On proceeding to Edinburgh to resume his official duties, Sir Walter established himself in a furnished house in Walker Street, it being impossible for him to leave his daughter alone in the country, and the aspect of his affairs being so much ameliorated that he did not think it necessary to carry the young lady to such a place as Mrs Brown's lodgings During the six ensuing months, however, he led much the same life of toil and seclusion from company which that of Abbotsford had been during the preceding autumn, very rarely dining abroad, except with one or two intimate friends, *en famille*, still more rarely receiving even a single guest at home, and when there was no such interruption, giving his night as well as his morning to the desk.

CHAPTER XXVI.

REVIEWS—ILLNESS—A KNOWLEDGE OF AUTHORSHIP OF NOVELS—PUBLICATION OF LIFE OF NAPOLEON—CHRONICLES OF THE CANONGATE—TALES OF A GRANDFATHER—DIVIDEND TO CREDITORS.

DURING the winter of 1826-7, Sir Walter suffered great pain (enough to have disturbed effectually any other man's labours, whether official or literary) from successive attacks of rheumatism, which seems to have been fixed on him by the wet sheets of one of his French nuns; and his Diary contains, besides, various indications that his constitution was already shaking under the fatigue to which he had subjected it. Formerly, however great the quantity of work he put through his hands, his evenings were almost always reserved for the light reading of an elbow-chair, or the enjoyment of his family and friends. Now he seemed to grudge every minute that was not spent at the desk. The little that he read of new books, or for mere amusement, was done by snatches in the course of his meals; and to walk, when he could walk at all, to the Parliament House, and back again through the Prince's Street gardens, was his only exercise and his only relaxation. Every ailment, of whatever sort, ended in aggravating his limeness, and perhaps the severest test his philosophy encountered was the feeling of bodily helplessness that from week to week crept upon him. The winter, to make bad worse, was a very cold and stormy one. The growing sluggishness of his blood showed itself in chilblains, not only on the feet, but the fingers, and his handwriting becomes more and more cramped and confused. I shall not pain the reader by extracting merely medical entries from his Diary, but the following give characteristic sketches of his temperament and reflections.

"December 16.—Another bad night. I remember I used to think a slight illness was a luxurious thing. My pillow was then softened by the hand of affection, and the little cares put in exercise to soothe the languor or pain were more flattering and pleasing than the consequences of the illness were disagreeable. It was a new scene to be watched and attended, and I used to think that the *malade imaginaire* gained something by his humour. It is different in the later stages—the old post-chaise gets more shattered and out of order at every turn; windows will not be pulled up, doors refuse to open, or, being open, will not shut again, which last is rather my case. There is some new subject of complaint every moment—your sicknesses come thicker and thicker—your comforting and sympathizing friends fewer and fewer—for why should they sorrow for the course of nature? The recollection of youth, health, and uninterrupted powers of activity, neither improved nor enjoyed, is a poor strain of comfort. The best is, the long halt will arrive at last, and cure all."

He spent a few days at Abbotsford at Christmas, and several weeks

during the spring vacation, but the frequent Saturday excursions were now out of the question—if for no other reason, on account of the quantity of books which he must have by him while working at his Napoleon. He says on the 30th of December “Wrote hard Last day of an eventful year, much evil, and some good, but especially the courage to endure what Fortune sends without becoming a pipe for her fingers* It is *not* the last day of the year, but to-morrow being Sunday, we hold our festival to-day—The Fergusons came, and we had the usual appliances of mirth and good cheer Yet our party, like the chariot-wheels of Pharaoh in the Red Sea, dragged heavily—It must be allowed that the regular recurrence of annual festivals among the same individuals has, as life advances, something in it that is melancholy We meet like the survivors of some perilous expedition, wounded and weakened ourselves, and looking through diminished ranks to think of those who are no more Or they are like the feasts of the Caribs, in which they held that the pale and speechless phantoms of the deceased appeared and mingled with the living Yet where shall we fly from vain-repining? or why should we give up the comfort of seeing our friends, because they can no longer be to us, or we to them, what we once were to each other?”

During the early months of 1827, however, he executed various minor tracts also for the Quarterly Review, an article on Mackenzie's Life and Works of John Home, author of Douglas, which is, in fact, a rich chapter of Scott's own early reminiscences, and gives many interesting sketches of the literary society of Scotland in the age of which Mackenzie was the last honoured relic, and for the Foreign Review, then newly started under the editorship of Mr R. P. Gillies, an ingenious and elaborate paper on the writings of the German novelist Hoffman. This article, it is proper to observe, was a benefaction to Mr Gillies, whose pecuniary affairs rendered such assistance very desirable Scott's generosity in this matter—for it was exactly giving a poor brother author £100 at the expense of considerable time and drudgery to himself—I think it necessary to mention, the date of the exertion requires it of me But such, in fact, had been in numberless instances his method of serving literary persons, who had little or no claim on him, except that they were of that class I have not conceived it delicate to specify many instances of this kind; but I am at liberty to state, that when he wrote his first article for the Encyclopædia Supplement, and the editor of that work, Mr Macvey Napier (a Whig in politics, and with whom he had hardly any personal acquaintance), brought him £100 as his remuneration, Sir Walter said, “Now tell me frankly, if I don't take this money, does it go into your pocket or your publisher's, for it is impossible for me to accept a penny of it from a literary brother” Mr Napier assured him that the arrangements of the work were such that the editor had nothing to do with the fund destined for contributions.—Scott then pocketed his due, with the observation that “he had trees to plant, and no conscience as to the purse of his fat friend”—to wit, Constable

That season was enlivened by one public dinner, and thus, though very briefly noticed in Scott's Diary, occupied a large space in public attention at the time, and, I believe I may add, several columns in every news-

* *Hamlet*, Act III, Scene 2.

paper printed in Europe. His good friend William Murray, manager of the Edinburgh Theatre, invited him to preside at the first festival of a charitable fund then instituted for the behoof of decayed performers, and he agreed.

This dinner took place on Friday, the 23rd February. Sir Walter took the chair, being supported by the Earl of Fife, Lord Meadowbank, Sir John Hope of Pinkie, Admiral Adam, Robert Dundas of Arniston, Peter Robertson, and many other personal friends. Lord Meadowbank had come on short notice, and was asked abruptly on his arrival to take a toast which had been destined for a noble person who had not been able to appear. He knew that this was the first public dinner at which the object of this toast had appeared since his misfortunes, and, taking him aside in the anteroom, asked him whether he would consider it indelicate to hazard a distinct reference to the parentage of the Waverley Novels, as to which there had, in point of fact, ceased to be any obscurity from the hour of Constable's failure. Sir Walter smiled, and said, "Do just as you like—only don't say much about so old a story." In the course of the evening the Judge rose accordingly and said—

"I would beg leave to propose a toast—the health of one of the patrons, a great and distinguished individual, whose name must always stand by itself, and which, in an assembly such as this, or in any other assembly of Scotsmen, must ever be received, I will not say with ordinary feelings of pleasure or of delight, but with those of rapture and enthusiasm. In doing this I feel that I stand in a somewhat new situation. Whoever had been called upon to propose the health of my hon friend some time ago, would have found himself enabled, from the mystery in which certain matters were involved, to gratify himself and his auditors by allusions sure to find a responding chord in their own feelings, and to deal in the language, the sincere language of panegyric, without intruding on the modesty of the great individual to whom I refer. But it is no longer possible, consistently with the respect due to my auditors, to use upon this subject terms either of mystification or of obscure or indirect allusion. The clouds have been dispelled—the *darkness visible* has been cleared away—and the Great Unknown—the minstrel of our native land—the mighty magician who has rolled back the current of time, and conjured up before our living senses the men and the manners of days which have long passed away, stands revealed to the eyes and the hearts of his affectionate and admiring countrymen * * * * He it is who has opened to foreigners the grand and characteristic beauties of our country. It is to him that we owe that our gallant ancestors and illustrious patriots—who fought and bled in order to obtain and secure that independence and that liberty we now enjoy—have obtained a fame no longer confined to the boundaries of a remote and comparatively obscure country—it is *he* who has called down upon their struggles for glory and freedom the admiration of foreign lands. He it is who has conferred a new reputation on our national character, and bestowed on Scotland an imperishable name, were it only by her having given birth to himself. I propose the health of Sir Walter Scott."

Long before Lord Meadowbank ceased speaking, the company had got upon chairs and tables, and the storm of applause that ensued was deafening. When they recovered from the first fever of their raptures, Sir Walter spoke as follows—

"I certainly did not think, in coming here to-day, that I should have the task of acknowledging, before 300 gentlemen, a secret which, considering that it was communicated to more than twenty people, has been remarkably well kept. I am now at the bar of my country, and may be understood to be on trial before Lord Meadowbank as an offender, and so quietly did all who were *art and part* conduct themselves, that I am sure that, were the *panel* now to stand on his defence, every im-

partial jury would bring in a verdict of *Not Proven* I am willing, however, to plead *guilty*—nor shall I detain the Court by a long explanation why my confession has been so long deferred. Perhaps caprice might have a considerable share in the matter. I have now to say, however, that the merits of these works, if they had any, and their faults are all entirely imputable to myself. Like another Scottish criminal of more consequence, one Macbeth,

“‘I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on’t again I dare not’

“I have thus far unbosomed myself, and I know that my confession will be reported to the public. I mean, then, seriously to state, that when I say I am the author, I mean the total and undivided author. With the exception of quotations, there is not a single word that was not derived from myself, or suggested in the course of my reading. The wand is now broken, and the book buried. You will allow me further to say, with Prospero, it is your breath that has filled my sails, and to crave one single twist in the capacity of the author of these novels. I would fain dedicate a bumper to the health of one who has represented several of those characters, of which I had endeavoured to give the skeleton, with a truth and liveliness for which I may well be grateful. I beg leave to propose the health of my friend Bailie Nicol Jarvie—and I am sure that when the author of *Waverley* and Rob Roy drinks to Nicol Jarvie, it will be received with the just applause to which that gentleman has always been accustomed,—nay, that you will take care that on the present occasion it shall be *PRO—DI—GI—OUS!*” (Long and vehement applause.)

MR MACKAY —“My conscience! My worthy father the deacon could never have believed that his son would have sic a compliment paid to him by the Great Unknown!”

SIR WALTER SCOTT —“The Small Known now, Mr Bailie,” &c, &c

The “sensation” produced by this scene was, in newspaper phrase, “unprecedented.” Sir Walter’s Diary merely says—“*February 24*—I carried my own instructions into effect the best I could, and if our jests were not good, our laughter was abundant. I think I will hardly take the chair again when the company is so miscellaneous, though they all behaved perfectly well. Meadowbank taxed me with the novels, and, to end that farce at once, I pleaded guilty, so that spore is ended. As to the collection—it has been much cry and little woo, as the devil said when he shored the sow. I got away at ten at night. The performers performed very like gentlemen, especially Will Murray —*March 2*.—Clerk walked home with me from the Court. I was scarce able to keep up with him, could once have done it well enough. Funny thing at the theatre last night. Among the discourse in *High Life Below Stairs*, one of the ladies’ ladies asks who wrote Shakespeare. One says ‘Ben Jonson,’ another ‘Fimis’ ‘No,’ said Will Murray, ‘it is Sir Walter Scott, he confessed it at a public meeting the other day.’”

The reader may, perhaps, expect that I should endeavour to name the “upwards of twenty persons” whom Sir Walter alluded to on this occasion as having been put into the secret of the *Waverley Novels* previously, and, without reference to the catastrophe of 1826, I am by no means sure that I can give the complete list, but in addition to the immediate members of the author’s own family—(including his mother and his brother Thomas)—there were Constable, Cadell, the two Ballantynes, Terry, Laidlaw, Mr Train, and Mr G. H. Gordon, Charles, Duke of Buccleuch, Lady Louisa Stewart, Lord Montague, Lord and Lady Polwarth, Lord Kinnedder, Sir Adam Ferguson, Mr Morritt, Mr and Mrs.

Skene, Mr William Clerk, Mr. Hay Donaldson, Mr. John Richardson and Mr Thomas Moore

The entries in Scott's Diary on contemporary literature are at this time very few; nor are there many on the public events of the day, though the period was a very stirring one. He seems in fact to have very rarely seen, even when in town, any newspaper except the *Edinburgh Weekly Journal*. At his age it is not wonderful that when that sheet reached him it for the most part contained the announcement of a death which interested his feelings, and several of the following passages refer to incidents of this melancholy class —

"*January 9* — This morning received the long-expected news of the Duke of York's death. I am sorry both on public and private accounts H. R. H. was, while he occupied the situation of next in succession, a *Breakwater* behind the throne. I fear his brother of Clarence's opinions may be different, and that he may hoist a standard under which men of desperate hopes and evil designs will rendezvous. I am sorry, too, on my own account. The Duke of York was uniformly kind to me, and though I never tasked his friendship, yet I find a powerful friend is gone. His virtues were honour, good sense, and integrity, and by exertion of these qualities he raised the British army from a very low ebb to be the pride and dread of Europe. His errors were those of a sanguine and social temper—he could not resist the temptation of deep play, which was fatally allied with a disposition to the bottle. This last is incident to his complaint, which vinous influence soothes for the time, while it insidiously increases it in the end.

"*February 10* — I got a present of Lord Francis Gower's printed but unpublished *Tale of the Mill*. It is a fine tale of terror in itself, and very happily brought out. He has certainly a true taste for poetry. I do not know why, but from my childhood I have seen something fearful, or melancholy at least, about a mill. Whether I had been frightened at the machinery when very young, of which, I think, I have some shadowy remembrance—whether I had heard the stories of the Miller of Thirlstane, and similar molendinarian tragedies, I cannot tell, but not even recollections of the Lass of Patie's Mill, or the Miller of Mansfield, or 'he who dwelt on the river Dee,' have ever got over my inclination to connect gloom with a mill, especially when the sun is setting. So I entered into the spirit of the terror with which Lord Francis has invested his haunted spot.

"*April 25* — I have now got Boney pegg'd up in the knotty entrails of Saint Helena, and may make a short pause. So I finished the review of John Home's works, which, after all, are poorer than I thought them. Good blank verse and stately sentiment, but something lukewarmish, excepting Douglas, which is certainly a masterpiece. Even that does not stand the closet. Its merits are for the stage, and it is certainly one of the best acting plays going. Perhaps a play to act well should not be too poetical.

"*June 3* — Wrought hard. I thought I had but a trifle to do, but new things cast up, we get beyond the Lute, however, for I have killed him to-day. The newspapers are very saucy, the *Sun* says I have got £4,000 for suffering a Frenchman to look over my manuscript. Here is a proper

fellow for you ! I wonder what he thinks Frenchmen are made of walking money-bags, doubtless. 'Now,' as Sir Fretful Plagiary says 'another person would be vexed at this,' but I care not one brass farthing.

"June 5—Proofs Parliament House till two Commenced the character of Buonaparte To-morrow, being a Teind-day, I may hope to get it finished

"June 10—Rose with the odd consciousness of being free of my daily task I have heard that the fishwomen go to church of a Sunday with their creels new washed, and a few stones in them for ballast, just because they cannot walk steadily without their usual load I feel something like them, and rather inclined to take up some light task than to be altogether idle I have my proof-sheets, to be sure, but what are these to a whole day ? A good thought came in my head to write Stories for little Johnnie Lockhart, from the History of Scotland, like those taken from the History of England But I will not write mine quite so simply as Croker has done I am persuaded both children and the lower class of readers hate books which are written *down* to their capacity, and love those that are composed more for their elders and betters. I will make, if possible, a book that a child shall understand, yet a man will feel some temptation to peruse should he chance to take it up It will require, however, a simplicity of style not quite my own. The grand and interesting consists in ideas, not in words A clever thing of this kind might have a race

The Life of Buonaparte was at last published about the middle of June, 1827 Two years had elapsed since Scott began it ; but, by a careful comparison of dates, I have arrived at the conclusion that, his expeditions to Ireland and Paris, and the composition of novels and critical miscellanies being duly allowed for, the historical task occupied hardly more than twelve months The book was closely printed, in fact, those nine volumes contain as much letterpress as *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, the *Antiquary*, the *Monastery*, and the *Legend of Montrose*, all put together If it had been printed on the original model of those novels, the Life of Buonaparte would have filled from thirteen to fourteen volumes—the work of one twelvemonth, done in the midst of pain, sorrow, and ruin

The lofty impartiality with which Scott treats the personal character of Buonaparte was, of course, sure to make all ultra-politicians at home and abroad condemn his representation ; and an equally general and better founded exception was taken to the lavish imagery of his historical style. He despised the former clamour, to the latter he bowed submissive He could not, whatever character he might wish to assume, cease to be one of the greatest of poets. Metaphorical illustrations, which men born with prose in their souls hunt for painfully, and find only to murder, were to him the natural and necessary offspring and playthings of ever-teeming fancy He could not write a note to his printer—he could not speak to himself in his Diary—without introducing them Few will say that his historical style is, on the whole, excellent, none that it is perfect, but it is completely unaffected, and therefore excites nothing of the unpleasant feeling with which we consider the elaborate artifices of a far greater historian—the greatest that our literature can

boast—Gibbon. The rapidity of the execution infers many inaccuracies as to minor matters of fact; but it is nevertheless true that no inaccuracy in the smallest degree affecting the character of the book, as a fair record of great events, has to this hour been detected even by the malevolent ingenuity of Jacobin and Buonapartist pamphleteers. Even the most hostile examiners were obliged to acknowledge that the gigantic career of their idol had been traced, in its leading features, with wonderful truth and spirit. No civilian, it was universally admitted, had ever before described modern battles and campaigns with any approach to his daring and comprehensive felicity. The public, ever unwilling to concede a new species of honour to a name already covered with distinction, listened eagerly for a while to the indignant reclamations of nobodies, whose share in mighty transactions had been omitted or slightly misrepresented; but, ere long, all these pompous rectifications were summed up, and found to constitute nothing but a contemptible monument of self-deluding vanity. The work, devoured at first with breathless delight, had a shade thrown over it for a time by the pertinacious blustering of these angry Lilliputians, but it has now emerged, slowly and surely, from the mist of suspicion, and few, whose opinions deserve much attention, hesitate to avow their conviction that, whoever may be the Polybius of the modern Hannibal, posterity will recognize his Livy in Scott.

Woodstock, as we have seen, placed upwards of £8,000 in the hands of Sir Walter's creditors. The Napoleon (first and second editions) produced for them a sum which it even now startles me to mention—£18,000. As by the time the historical work was published, nearly half of the First Series of Chronicles of the Canongate had been written, it is obvious that the amount to which Scott's literary industry, from the close of 1825 to the 10th of June, 1827, had diminished his debt, cannot be stated at less than £28,000. Had health been spared him, how soon must he have freed himself from all his encumbrances!

My wife and I spent the summer of 1827 partly at a sea-bathing place near Edinburgh, and partly in Roxburghshire, and I shall, in my account of the sequel of this year, draw, as it may happen, on Sir Walter's Diary, the memoranda of friendly visitors, or my own recollections. The arrival of his daughter and her children at Portobello was a source of constant refreshment to him during June, for every other day he came down and dined there, and strolled about afterwards on the beach, thus interrupting, beneficially for his health, and I doubt not for the result of his labours also, the new custom of regular night-work, or, as he called it, of serving double tides. When the Court released him, and he returned to Abbotsford, his family did what they could to keep him to his ancient evening habits, but nothing was so useful as the presence of his invalid grandson. The poor child was at this time so far restored as to be able to sit his pony again; and Sir Walter, who had, as the reader observed, conceived, the very day he finished Napoleon, the notion of putting together a series of stories on the History of Scotland, somewhat in the manner of Mr. Croker's on that of England, rode daily among the woods with his "Hugh Littlejohn," and told the tale, and ascertained that it suited the comprehension of boyhood, before he reduced it to writing. Sibyl Grey had been dismissed in consequence of the accident at the

Castrail; and he had now stooped his pride to a sober, steady creature, of a very humble blood; dun, with black mane and legs; by name Douce Davie, *alias* the Covenanter. This, the last of his steeds, by the way, had been previously in the possession of a jolly old laird in a neighbouring county, and acquired a distinguished reputation by its skill in carrying him home safely when dead drunk. Douce Davie, on such occasions, accommodated himself to the swerving balance of his rider with such nice discrimination, that, on the laird's death, the country people expected a vigorous competition for the sagacious animal, but the club companions of the defunct stood off to a man, when it was understood that the Sheriff coveted the succession.

The Chronicles of the Canongate proceeded *pari passu* with these historical tales, and both works were published before the end of the year. He also superintended, at the same time, the first collection of his Prose Miscellanies, in six volumes 8vo, several articles being remodelled and extended to adapt them for a more permanent sort of existence than had been originally thought of. Moreover, Sir Walter penned that autumn his beautiful and instructive paper on the Planting of Waste Lands, which is indeed no other than a precious chapter of his autobiography for the Quarterly Review. What he wrote of new matter between June and December fills from five to six volumes in the late uniform edition of his works, but all this was light and easy after the perilous drudgery of the preceding eighteen months.

On the 22nd of July his Diary bears the date of *Minto*. He then says. "We rubbed up some recollections of twenty years ago, when I was more intimate in the family, till Whig and Tory separated us for a time. By the way, nobody talks Whig or Tory just now, and the fighting men on each side go about muzzled and mute, like dogs after a proclamation about canine madness. Am I sorry for this truce or not? Half-and-half. It is all we have left to stir the blood, this little political brawling. But better too little of it than too much. Here I have received news of two deaths at once. Lady Die Scott, my very old friend, and Archibald Constable, the bookseller"—He adds next day. "Yes! they are both, for very different reasons, subjects of reflection. Lady Diana Scott, widow of Walter Scott of Harden, was the last person whom I recollect so much older than myself, that she kept always at the same distance in point of age, so that she scarce seemed older to me (relatively) two years ago, when in her ninety-second year, than fifty years before. She was the daughter (alone remaining) of Pope's Earl of Marchmont, and, like her father, had an acute mind and an eager temper. She was always kind to me, remarkably so indeed when I was a boy.—Constable's death might have been a most important thing to me if it had happened some years ago, and I should then have lamented it much. He has lived to do me some injury, yet, excepting the last £5,000, I think most unintentionally. He was a prince of booksellers, his views sharp, powerful, and liberal, too sanguine, however, and like many bold and successful schemers, never knowing when to stand or stop, and not always calculating his means to his object with mercantile accuracy. He was very vain, for which he had some reason, having raised himself to great commercial eminence, as he might also, with good management, have attained great wealth. He

knew, I think, more of the business of a bookseller, in planning and executing popular works, than any man of his time. In books themselves he had much bibliographical information, but none whatever that could be termed literary. He knew the rare volumes of his library not only by the eye, but by the touch, when blindfolded. Thomas Thomson saw him make his experiment, and, that it might be complete, placed in his hand an ordinary volume instead of one of these *libri rariores*. He said he had over-estimated his memory, he could not recollect that volume. Constable was a violent tempered man with those he dared use freedom with. He was easily overawed by people of consequence, but, as usual, took it out of those whom poverty made subservient to him. Yet he was generous, and far from bad-hearted, in person good-looking, but corpulent latterly, a large feeder and deep drinker, till his health became weak. He died of water in the chest, which the natural strength of his constitution set long at defiance. I have no great reason to regret him, yet I do. If he deceived me, he also deceived himself."

Constable's spirit had been effectually broken by his downfall. To stoop from being *primus absque secundo* among the Edinburgh booksellers, to be the occupant of an obscure closet of a shop, without capital, without credit, all his mighty undertakings abandoned or gone into other hands, except indeed his Miscellany, which he had now no resources for pushing on in the fashion he once contemplated—this reverse was too much for that proud heart. He no longer opposed a determined mind to the ailments of the body, and sunk on the 21st of this month, having, as I am told, looked long ere he took to his bed at least ten years older than he was. He died in his fifty-fourth year, but into that space he had crowded vastly more than the usual average of zeal and energy, of hilarity and triumph, and perhaps of anxiety and misery.

About this time the rumour became prevalent that Mr Canning's health was breaking up among toils and mortifications of another order, and Scott's Diary has some striking entries on this painful subject. Meeting Lord Melville casually at the seat of a common friend towards the end of July, he says "I was sorry to see my very old friend, this upright statesman and honourable gentleman, deprived of his power and his official income, which the number of his family must render a matter of importance. He was cheerful, not affectedly so, and bore his declension like a wise and brave man. Canning said the office of Premier was his by inheritance, he could not, from constitution, hold it above two years, and then it would descend to Peel. Such is ambition! Old friends forsaken—old principles changed—every effort used to give the vessel of the State a new direction, and all to be Palinurus for two years!"

Of the 10th of August—when the news of Mr Canning's death reached Abbotsford—and the day following, are these entries. "The death of the Premier is announced—late George Canning—the witty, the accomplished, the ambitious, he who had toiled thirty years, and involved himself in the most harassing discussions, to attain this dizzy height, he who had held it for three months of intrigue and obloquy—and now a heap of dust, and that is all. He was an early and familiar friend of mine, through my intimacy with George Ellis. No man possessed a

gay and more playful wit in society; no one since Pitt's time had more commanding sarcasm in debate; in the House of Commons he was the terror of that species of orators called the Yelpers. His lash fetched away both skin and flesh, and would have penetrated the hide of a rhinoceros. In his conduct as a statesman he had a great fault, he lent himself too willingly to intrigue. Thus he got into his quarrel with Lord Castlereagh, and lost credit with the country for want of openness. Thus, too, he got involved with the Queen's party to such an extent that it fettered him upon that miserable occasion, and obliged him to butter Sir Robert Wilson with dear friend, and gallant general, and so forth. The last composition with the Whigs was a sacrifice of principle on both sides. I have some reason to think they counted on getting rid of him in two or three years. To me Canning was always personally most kind. I saw with pain a great change in his health when I met him at Colonel Bolton's, at Storrs, in 1825. In London last year I thought him looking better. My nerves have for these two or three last days been susceptible of an acute excitement from the slightest causes, the beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly. But I must take exercise, and case-harden myself. There is no use in encouraging these moods of the mind.

"August 11.—Wrote nearly five pages; then walked. A visit from Henry Scott, nothing known as yet about politics. A high Tory Administration would be a great evil at this time. There are repairs in the structure of our constitution which ought to be made at this season, and without which the people will not long be silent. A pure Whig Administration would probably play the devil by attempting a thorough repair. As to a compound or melo-dramatic Ministry, the parts out of which such a one could be organized just now are at a terrible discount in public estimation, nor will they be at par in a hurry again. The public were generally shocked at the complete lack of principle testified on the late occasion, and by some who till then had high credit. The Duke of Wellington has risen by his firmness on the one side, Earl Grey on the other."

He received, about this time, a third visit from Mr. J. L. Adolphus. The second occurred in August, 1824, and since that time they had not met. I transcribe a few paragraphs from my friend's memoranda, on which I formerly drew so largely. He says —

"Calamity had borne heavily upon Sir Walter in the interval, but the painful and anxious feeling with which a friend is approached for the first time under such circumstances, gave way at once to the unassumed serenity of his manner. There were some signs of age about him which the mere lapse of time would scarcely have accounted for; but his spirits were abated only, not broken, if they had sunk, they had sunk equably and gently. It was a declining, not a clouded sun. I do not remember, at this period, hearing him make any reference to the afflictions he had suffered, except once, when, speaking of his *Life of Napoleon*, he said 'he knew that it had some inaccuracies, but he believed it would be found right in all essential points,' and then added, in a quiet but affecting tone, 'I could have done it better, if I could have written at more leisure, and with a mind more at ease.'

"Some days of my visit were marked by an almost perpetual confinement to the house, the rain being incessant. On a rainy day, when walking at the usual hour became hopeless, Sir Walter asked me to sit with him while he continued his morning occupation, giving me, for my own employment, the publications of the Bannatyne Club. His study, as I recollect it, was strictly a work-room, though an elegant one. It has been fancifully decked out in pictures, but it had, I think, very few articles of mere ornament. The chief of these was the print of Stothard's *Canterbury Pilgrims*, which hung over the chimney-piece, and, from the place assigned to it, must have been in great favour, though Sir Walter made the characteristic criticism upon it, that, if the procession were to move, the young squire who is prancing in the foreground would in another minute be over his horse's head. The shelves were stored with serviceable books, one door opened into the great library, and a hanging-stair within the room itself communicated with his bed-room. It would have been a good lesson to a desultory student, or even to a moderately active amanuensis, to see the unintermitted energy with which Sir Walter Scott applied himself to his work. I conjectured that he was at this time writing the *Tales of a Grandfather*. When we had sat down to our respective employments, the stillness of the room was unbroken, except by the light rattle of the rain against the windows, and the dashing trot of Sir Walter's pen over his paper, sounds not very unlike each other, and which seemed to vie together in rapidity and continuance. Sometimes, when he stopped to consult a book, a short dialogue would take place upon the subjects with which I was occupied—about *Mary Queen of Scots*, perhaps, or *Viscount Dundee*; or, again, the silence might be broken for a moment by some merry outcry in the hall, from one of the little grandchildren, which would half waken *Nimrod*, or *Bran*, or *Spice*, as they slept at Sir Walter's feet, and produce a growl or a stifled bark, not in anger but by way of protest. For matters like these, work did not proceed the worse, nor, as it seemed to me, did Sir Walter feel at all discomposed by such interruptions as a message, or the entrance of a visitor. One door of his study opened into the hall, and there did not appear to be any understanding that he should not be disturbed. At the end of our morning we attempted a sortie, but had made only a little way in the shrubby-walks overlooking the *Tweed* when the rain drove us back. The river, swollen and discoloured, swept by majestically, and the sight drew from Sir Walter his favourite lines—

" 'I've seen *Tweed's* silver streams, glittering in the sunny beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they rolled on their way.'

"There could not have been a better moment for appreciating the imagery of the last line. I think it was in this short walk that he mentioned to me, with great satisfaction, the favourable prospects of his literary industry, and spoke sanguinely of retrieving his 'losses with the booksellers'.

"Those who have seen *Abbotsford* will remember that there is at the end of the hall, opposite to the entrance of the library, an arched doorway leading to other rooms. One night some of the party observed that by an arrangement of light, easily to be imagined, a luminous space was

formed upon the library door, in which the shadow of a person standing in the opposite archway made a very imposing appearance, the body of the hall remaining quite dark. Sir Walter had some time before told his friends of the deception of sight (mentioned in his *Demonology*) which made him for a moment imagine a figure of Lord Byron standing in the same hall. The discoverers of the little phantasmagoria which I have just described called to him to come and see *their* ghost. Whether he thought that raising ghosts at a man's door was not a comely amusement, or whether the parody upon a circumstance which had made some impression upon his own fancy was a little too strong, he certainly did not enter into the jest."

About the close of August, Sir Walter's Diary is chiefly occupied with an affair which, as the reader of the previous chapter is aware, did not come altogether unexpectedly on him. Among the documents laid before him in the Colonial Office, when he was in London at the close of 1826, were some which represented one of Buonaparte's attendants at St Helena, General Gourgaud, as having been guilty of gross unfairness, giving the English Government private information that the Emperor's complaints of ill-usage were utterly unfounded, and yet then, and afterwards, aiding and assisting the delusion in France as to the harshness of Sir Hudson Lowe's conduct towards his captive. Sir Walter, when using these remarkable documents, guessed that Gourgaud might be inclined to fix a personal quarrel on himself, and there now appeared in the newspapers a succession of hints that the General was seriously bent on this purpose. He applied, as "Colonel Grogg" would have done forty years before, to "The Baronet"

DIARY—"August 27—A singular letter from a lady, requesting me to father a novel of hers. That won't pass. Cadell transmits a notice from the French papers that Gourgaud has gone, or is going, to London, and the bibliopoliſt is in a great funk. I lack some part of his instinct. I have done Gourgaud no wrong. I have written to Will Clerk, who has mettle in him, and will think of my honour as well as my safety."

"September 4.—William Clerk quite ready and willing to stand my friend if Gourgaud should come my road. He agrees with me that there is no reason why he should turn on me, but that if he does, reason or none, it is best to stand buff to him. It appears to me that what is least forgiven in a man of any mark or likelihood is want of that article blackguardly called *pluck*. All the fine qualities of genius cannot make amends for it. We are told the genius of poets, especially, is irreconcilable with this species of grenadier accomplishment. If so, *quel chien de genre!*

"September 10.—Gourgaud's wrath has burst forth in a very distant clap of thunder, in which he accuses me of contriving, with the Ministry, to slander his rag of a reputation. He be d——d for a fool, to make his case worse by stirring. I shall only revenge myself by publishing the whole extracts I made from the records of the Colonial Office, in which he will find enough to make him bite his nails.

"September 17.—Received from James Ballantyne the proofs of my Reply, with some cautious blytham from mine honest friend, alarmed by a Highland colonel, who had described Gourgaud as a *mauvais garçon*,

famous fencer, marksman, and so forth. I wrote in answer, which is true, that I hoped all my friends would trust to my acting with proper caution and advice; but that if I were capable, in a moment of weakness, of doing anything short of what my honour demanded, I should die the death of a poisoned rat in a hole, out of mere sense of my own degradation. God knows that, though life is phlegm enough with me, I do not feel anything to attach me to it so strongly as to occasion my avoiding any risk which duty to my character may demand from me. I set to work with the Tales of a Grandfather, second volume, and finished four pages."

Sir Walter's family were relieved from considerable anxiety when the newspapers ceased to give paragraphs about General Gourgaud, and the blowing over of this alarm was particularly acceptable to his able daughter, who had to turn southwards about the beginning of October. He himself certainly cared little or nothing about that (or any similar) affair; and if it had any effect at all upon his spirits, they were pleasantly excited and stimulated. He possessed a pair of pistols taken from Napoleon's carriage at Waterloo, and presented to him, I believe, by the late Honourable Colonel James Stanhope, and he said he designed to make use of them, in case the controversy should end in a rencontre, and his friend Clerk should think as well as he did of their fabric. But this was probably a jest. I may observe that I once saw Sir Walter shoot at a mark with pistols, and he acquitted himself well; so much so, as to excite great admiration in some young officers whom he had found practising in his barn on a rainy day. With the rifle he was aided by those who knew him in early life to have been a very good shot indeed.

Before Gourgaud fell quite asleep, Sir Walter made an excursion to Edinburgh, to meet his friends Mr. MacLean Clephane and Lady Northampton, with whom he had some business to transact, and they, feeling, as all his intimate friends at this time did, that the kindest thing they could do by him was to keep him as long as possible away from his desk, contrived to seduce him into accepting them as far as Greenock on their way to the Hebrides. He went down with him his esteemed kinsman, Mr. Campbell of Blythwood, in whose park he saw, with much interest, the Argyle Stone, marking the spot where the celebrated Earl was taken prisoner in 1685. He notes in his diary, that "the Highland drovers are still apt to break Blythwood's fence for this stone," and then records the capital turn, &c., of his friend's entertainment, and some good stories told at table, especially the "Prayer of the minister of the Cambrays (two my table, built in the room of the Clyde)—'O Lord, bless and begracious to the Greater and the Lesser Cambrays, and in Thy mercy do not forget the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland.' This is not personation with a vengeance."

On returning from this trip, Scotland received an invitation from Lord and Lady Ravensworth to visit the Duke of Welling at Park House at Dalhousie. The Duke was then making arrangements in the north of Scotland, to which additional importance was given by the war in which political arrangement, the chance of Lord Gough's being called upon to take himself as Commander-in-Chief for so many years, and, I think, upon that his Government would be called upon to call him to the aid of Commander of the Forces, which he had accepted under the new

Premier, gaining ground every day Sir Walter, who felt for the great captain the pure and exalted devotion that might have been expected from some honoured soldier of his banners, accepted this invitation, and witnessed a scene of enthusiasm with which its principal object could hardly have been more gratified than he was

DIARY—"October 1—I set about work for two hours, and finished three pages, then walked for two hours, then home, adjusted sherriff processes, and cleared the table. I am to set off to-morrow for Ravensworth Castle, to meet the Duke of Wellington, a great let-off, I suppose Yet I would almost rather stay, and see two days more of Lockhart and my daughter, who will be off before my return Perhaps— But there is no end to *perhaps* We must cut the rope, and let the vessel drive down the tide of destiny

"October 2—Set out in the morning at seven, and reached Kelso by a little past ten with my own horses Then took the Wellington coach to carry me to Wellington—smart that! * * * * When I arrived, the family had just retired Lord Ravensworth and Mr Laddell came down, however, and both received me as kindly as possible.

"October 3—Rose about eight or later My morals begin to be corrupted by travel and fine company Went to Durham with Lord Ravensworth betwixt one and two Found the gentlemen of Durham countr and town assembled to receive the Duke of Wellington I saw several old friends, and with difficulty suited names to faces, and faces to names. There were Dr Philpotts, Dr Gilly, and his wife, and a world of acquaintance,—among others, Sir Thomas Lawrence, whom I asked to come on to Abbotsford, but he could not. He is, from habit of coaxing his subjects, I suppose, a little too fair-spoken, otherwise very pleasant. The Duke arrived very late. There were bells, and cannon, and drums, trumpets, and banners, besides a fine troop of yeomanry The address well expressed, and as well answered by the Duke. The enthusiasm of the ladies and the gentry was great, the common people more lukewarm The Duke has lost popularity in accepting political power He will be more useful to his country, it may be, than ever, but will scarce be so gracious in the people's eyes, and he will not care a curse for what outward show he has lost. But I must not talk of curses, for we are going to take our dinner with the Bishop of Durham We dined about one hundred and forty or fifty men, a distinguished company for rank and property. Marshal Beresford and Sir John,* amongst others—Marquis of Lothian, Lord Feversham, Marquis Londonderry, and I know not who besides—

‘Lords and dukes, and noble princes,
All the pride and flower of Spain’

We dined in the old baronial hall, impressive from its rude antiquity, and fortunately free from the plaster of former improvement, as I trust it will long be from the gingerbread taste of modern Gothicizers The bright moon streaming in through the old Gothic windows contrasted strangely with the artificial lights within, spears, banners, and armour

* Admiral Sir John Beresford had some few years before this commanded on the Leith station, when Sir Walter and he saw a great deal of each other, "and merry men were they"

were intermixed with the pictures of old bishops, and the whole had a singular mixture of baronial pomp with the grave and more chastened dignity of prelacy. The conduct of our reverend entertainer suited the character remarkably well. Amid the welcome of a Count Palatine he did not for an instant forget the gravity of the Church dignitary. All his toasts were gracefully given, and his little speeches well made, and the more affecting that the failing voice sometimes reminded us that our host laboured under the infirmities of advanced life. To me personally the Bishop was very civil.

"Our party went to-day to Sunderland, when the Duke was brilliantly received by an immense population, chiefly of seamen. The difficulty of getting into the rooms was dreadful—an ebbing and flowing of the crowd which nearly took me off my legs. The entertainment was handsome, about two hundred dined, and appeared most hearty in the cause which had convened them—some indeed so much so that, finding themselves so far on the way to perfect happiness, they e'en would go on. After the dinner party broke up there was a ball, numerously attended, where there was a prodigious anxiety discovered for shaking of hands. The Duke had enough of it, and I came in for my share, for, though as jackal to the lion, I got some part in whatever was going. We got home about half-past two in the morning sufficiently tired."

Some months afterwards, Sir Cuthbert Sharp, who had been particularly kind and attentive to Scott when at Sunderland, happened, in writing to him on some matters of business, to say he hoped he had not forgotten his friends in that quarter. Sir Walter's answer to Sir Cuthbert (who had been introduced to him by his old and dear friend Mr Surtees of Mainsforth) begins thus,—

"Forget thee! No! my worthy fere!
Forget blithe mirth and gallant cheer!
Death sooner stretch me on my bier!
Forget thee! No.

"Forget the universal shout
When 'canny Sunderland' broke out—
A truth which knaves affect to doubt—
Forget thee! No.

"Forget you! No—though now a day
I've heard your knowing people say,
Disown the debt you cannot pay,
You'll find it far the thriftiest way—
But I?—O no

"Forget your kindness found for all room,
In what, though large, seem'd still a small room,
Forget my *Surtees* in a ball room—
Forget you! No.

"Forget your sprightly dumpty-diddles,
And beauty tripping to the fiddles,
Forget my lovely friends the *Laddells*—
Forget you! No

"So much for oblivion, my dear Sir C., and now, having dismounted from my Pegasus, who is rather spavined, I charge afoot, like an old dragoon as I am," &c, &c

On the 8th Sir Walter reached Abbotsford, and forthwith resumed his Grandfather's Tales, which he composed throughout with the ease and heartiness reflected in this entry "This morning was damp, dripping, and unpleasant, so I even made a work of necessity, and set to the Tales like a dragon I murdered Maclellan of Bomby at the Thieve Castle, stabbed the Black Douglas in the town of Stirling; astonished King James before Roxburgh, and stifled the Earl of Mar in his bath in the Canongate. A wild world, my masters, this Scotland of ours must have been No fear of want of interest, no lassitude in those days for want of work—

'For treason, d'ye see,
Was to them a dish of tea,
And murder bread and butter'"

Such was his life in autumn 1827 Before I leave the period, I must note how greatly I admired the manner in which all his dependants appeared to have met the reverse of his fortunes—a reverse which inferred very considerable alteration in the circumstances of every one of them The butler, instead of being the easy chief of a large establishment, was now doing half the work of the house, at probably half his former wages, old Peter, who had been for five and twenty years a dignified coachman, was now ploughman in ordinary, only putting his horses to the carriage upon high and rare occasions, and so on with all the rest that remained of the ancient train And all, to my view, seemed happier than they had ever done before Their good conduct had given every one of them a new elevation in his own mind, and yet their demeanour had gained in place of losing, in simple humility of observance The great loss was that of William Laidlaw, for whom (the estate being all but a fragment in the hands of the trustees and their agent) there was now no occupation here. The cottage, which his taste had converted into a loveable retreat, had found a rent-paying tenant, and he was living a dozen miles off on the farm of a relation in the Vale of Yarrow Every week, however, he came down to have a ramble with Sir Walter over their old haunts, —to hear how the pecuniary atmosphere was darkening or brightening, and to read in every face at Abbotsford that it could never be itself again until circumstances should permit his re-establishment at Knaeside.

All this warm and respectful solicitude must have had a preciously soothing influence on the mind of Scott, who may be said to have lived upon love No man cared less about popular admiration and applause; but for the least chill on the affection of any near and dear to him he had the sensitiveness of a maiden I cannot forget, in particular, how his eyes sparkled when he first pointed out to me Peter Mathieson guiding the plough on the brugh. "Egad," said he, "auld Pepe—(this was the children's name for their good friend)—auld Pepe's whistling at his darg The honest fellow said, a yoking in a deep field would do baith him and the blackies good. If things get round with me, easy shall be Pepe's cushion" In general, during that autumn, I thought Sir Walter enjoyed much his usual spirits.

The first series of Chronicles of the Canongate—(a title supplanted that of "*The Canongate Miscellany, or Traditions of the Sanctuary*")—was

published early in the winter. The contents were, the Highland Widow, the Two Drovers, and the Surgeon's Daughter, all in their styles excellent, except that the Indian part of the last does not well harmonize with the rest; and certain preliminary chapters which were generally considered as still better than the stories they introduce. The portraiture of Mrs Murray Keith under the name of Mrs Bethune Brihol, and that of Chrystal Croftangry throughout, appear to me unsurpassed in Scott's writings. In the former, I am assured he has mixed up various features of his own beloved mother, and in the latter, there can be no doubt that a good deal was taken from nobody but himself. In fact, the choice of the hero's residence, the original title of the book, and a world of minor circumstances, were suggested by the actual condition and prospects of the author's affairs, for it appears from his Diary, though I have not thought it necessary to quote those entries, that from time to time, between December, 1826, and November, 1827, he had renewed threatenings of severe treatment from the Jewish brokers, Messrs Abud and Co., and, on at least one occasion, he made every preparation for taking shelter in the Sanctuary of Holyrood House. Although these people were well aware that at Christmas, 1827, a very large dividend would be paid on the Ballantyne estate, they would not understand that their interest, and that of all the creditors, lay in allowing Scott the free use of his time; that by thwarting and harassing him personally, nothing was likely to be achieved but the throwing up of the trust, and the settlement of the insolvent house's affairs on the usual terms of a sequestration; in which case there could be no doubt that he would, on resigning all his assets, be discharged absolutely, with liberty to devote his future exertions to his own sole benefit. The Jews would understand nothing, but that the very unanimity of the other creditors as to the propriety of being gentle with him rendered it extremely probable that their harshness might be rewarded by immediate payment of their whole demand. They fancied that the trustees would clear off any one debt, rather than disturb the arrangements generally adopted, they fancied that, in case they had Sir Walter Scott in prison, there would be some extraordinary burst of feeling in Edinburgh—that private friends would interfere—in short, that in one way or another they should get hold, without further delay, of their "pound of flesh." Two or three paragraphs from the Diary will be enough as to this unpleasant subject.

"October 31.—Just as I was merrily cutting away among my trees, arrives Mr Gibson with a very melancholy look, and indeed the news he brought was shocking enough. It seems Mr Abud, the same who formerly was disposed to disturb me in London, has given positive orders to take out diligence against me for his debt. This breaks all the measures we had resolved on, and prevents the dividend from taking place, by which many poor persons will be great sufferers. For me the alternative will be more painful to my feelings than prejudicial to my interests. To submit to a sequestration, and allow the creditors to take what they can get, will be the inevitable consequence. This will cut short my labour by several years, which I might spend, and spend in vain, in endeavouring to meet their demands. We shall know more on Saturday, and not sooner. I went to Bowhill with Sir Adam Ferguson to dinner, and

maintained as good a countenance in the midst of my perplexities as a man need desire. It is not bravado, I feel firm and resolute.

"November 1—I waked in the night and lay two hours in feverish meditation. This is a tribute to natural feeling. But the air of a fine frosty morning gave me some elasticity of spirit. It is strange that about a week ago I was more dispirited for nothing at all than I am now for perplexities which set at defiance my conjectures concerning their issue. I suppose that I, the Chronicler of the Canongate, will have to take up my residence in the Sanctuary, unless I prefer the more airy residence of the Calton Jail, or a trip to the Isle of Man. It is to no purpose being angry with Abud, or Ahab, or whatever name he delights in. He is seeking his own, and thinks by these harsh measures to render his road to it more speedy. Sir Adam Ferguson left Bowhill this morning for Dumfriesshire. I returned to Abbotsford to Anne, and told her this unpleasant news. She stood it remarkably well, poor body.

"November 2—I was a little bilious this night—no wonder. Had sundry letters, without any power of giving my mind to answer them—one about Gourgaud with his nonsense. I shall not trouble my head more on that score. Well, it is a hard knock on the elbow, I knew I had a life of labour before me, but I was resolved to work steadily, now they have treated me like a recusant turnspit, and put in a red-hot cinder into the wheel alongst with me. But of what use is philosophy—and I have always pretended to a little of a practical character—if it cannot teach us to do or suffer? The day is glorious, yet I have little will to enjoy it, yet, were a twelvemonth over, I should perhaps smile at what makes me now very serious. Smile!—No, that can never be. My present feelings cannot be recollected with cheerfulness, but I may drop a tear of gratitude.

"November 4—Put my papers in some order, and prepared for the journey. It is in the style of the Emperors of Abyssinia, who proclaim—Cut down the Kontuffa in the four quarters of the world, for I know not where I am going. Yet, were it not for poor Anne's doleful looks, I would feel firm as a piece of granite. Even the poor dogs seem to fawn on me with anxious meaning, as if there were something going on they could not comprehend. They probably notice the packing of the clothes, and other symptoms of a journey.

"Set off at twelve, firmly resolved in body and mind. Dined at Fushie Bridge. Ah! good Mrs. Wilson, you know not you are like to lose an old customer!*

"But when I arrived in Edinburgh at my faithful friend Mr Gibson's—lo! the scene had again changed, and a new hare is started," &c, &c

The "new hare" was this. It transpired in the very nick of time that a suspicion of usury attached to these Israelites without guile, in a transaction with Hurst and Robinson, as to one or more of the bills for which the house of Ballantyne had become responsible. This suspicion, upon

* Mrs. Wilson, landlady of the inn at Fushie, one stage from Edinburgh, an old dame of some humour, with whom Sir Walter always had a friendly colloquy in passing. I believe the charm was that she had passed her childhood among the gipsies of the Border. But her fiery Radicalism latterly was another source of high merriment.

investigation, assumed a shape sufficiently tangible to justify Ballantyne's trustees in carrying the point before the Court of Session, but they failed to establish their allegation. The amount was then settled, but how and in what manner was long unknown to Scott. Sir William Forbes, whose banking-house was one of Messrs Ballantyne's chief creditors, crowned his generous efforts for Scott's relief by privately paying the whole of Abud's demand (nearly £2,000) out of his own pocket—ranking as an ordinary creditor for the amount, and taking care at the same time that his old friend should be allowed to believe that the affair had merged quietly in the general measures of the trustees. In fact it was not until some time after Sir William's death, that Sir Walter learned what he had done on this occasion; and I may as well add here that he himself died in utter ignorance of some services of a like sort, which he owed to the secret liberality of three of his brethren at the Clerks' table—Hector Macdonald Buchanan, Colin Mackenzie, and Sir Robert Dundas.

I ought not to omit that as soon as Sir Walter's eldest son heard of the Abud business, he left Ireland for Edinburgh; but before he reached his father the alarm had blown over.

This vision of the real Canongate has drawn me away from the *Chronicles of Mr Croftangry*. The scenery of his patrimonial inheritance was sketched from that of Carmichael, the ancient and now deserted mansion of the noble family of Hyndford, but for his strongly Scottish feelings about parting with his *land*, and stern efforts to suppress them, the author had not to go so far a-field. Christie Steele's brief character of Croftangry's ancestry, too, appears to suit well all that we have on record concerning his own more immediate progenitors of the stubborn race of Raeburn—"They werena ill to the poor folk, sir, and that is aye something, they were just decent bien bodies. Ony poor creature that had face to beg got an awmous and welcome, they that were shame-faced gaed by, and twice as welcome. But they keepit an honest walk before God and man, the Croftangrys, and as I said before, if they did little good, they did as little ill. They lifted their rents and spent them, called in their kaim and eat them, gaed to the kirk of a Sunday, bowed civilly if folk took aff their bannets as they gaed by, and lookit as black as sin at them that keepit them on." I hope I shall give no offence by adding that many things in the character and manners of Mr Gideon Gray of Middlemas in the tale of the Surgeon's Daughter were considered at the time by Sir Walter's neighbours on Tweedside as copied from Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson of Selkirk.

These *Chronicles* were not received with exceeding favour at the time, and Sir Walter was a good deal discouraged. Indeed, he seems to have been with some difficulty persuaded by Cadell and Ballantyne, that it would not do for him to "lie fallow" as a novelist, and then, when he in compliance with their entreaties began a *Second Canongate Series*, they were both disappointed with his MS, and told him their opinions so plainly that his good-nature was sharply tried. The tales which they disapproved of were those of *My Aunt Margaret's Mirror* and *The Laird's Jock*, he consented to lay them aside, and began *St Valentine's Eve*, or the *Fair Maid of Perth*, which from the first pleased his critics. It was in the brief interval occasioned by these misgivings and debates,

that his ever elastic mind threw off another charming paper for the Quarterly Review—that on Ornamental Gardening, by way of sequel to the Essay on Planting Waste Lands. Another fruit of his leisure was a sketch of the life of George Bannatyne, the collector of ancient Scottish poetry, for the club which bears his name.

He had taken, for that winter, the house No 6 Shandwick Place, which he occupied by the month during the remainder of his servitude as a Clerk of Session. Very near this house, he was told a few days after he took possession, dwelt the aged mother of his first love—the lady of the *Runic characters*—and he expressed to his friend Mrs Skene a wish that she should carry him to renew an acquaintance which seems to have been interrupted from the period of his youthful romance. Mrs Skene complied with his desire, and she tells me that a very painful scene ensued, adding, “I think it highly probable that it was on returning from this call that he committed to writing the verses, *To Time*, by his early favourite, which you have printed.

Sir Walter has this entry on reading the Gazette of the battle of Navarino.

“November 14.—We have thumped the Turks very well. But as to the justice of our interference, I will only suppose some Turkish plenipotentiary, with an immense turban and long loose trousers, comes to dictate to us the mode in which we should deal with our refractory hegemmen, the Catholics of Ireland. We hesitate to admit his interference, on which the Moslem runs into Cork Bay, or Bantry Bay, alongside of a British squadron, and sends a boat to tow on a fire-ship. A vessel fires on the boat and sinks it. Is there an aggression on the part of those who fired first, or of those whose manœuvres occasioned the firing?”

A few days afterwards he received a very agreeable piece of intelligence. The King had not forgotten his promise with respect to the poet's second son, and Lord Dudley, then Secretary of State for the Foreign Department, was a much attached friend from early days—(he had been partly educated at Edinburgh under the roof of Dugald Stewart)—his lordship had therefore been very well disposed to comply with the royal recommendation.—“November 30.—The great pleasure of a letter from Lord Dudley, informing me that he has received his Majesty's commands to put down the name of my son Charles for the first vacancy that shall occur in the Foreign Office, and at the same time to acquaint me with his gracious intentions, which were signified in language the most gratifying to me. This makes me really feel light and happy, and most grateful to the kind and gracious sovereign who has always shown, I may say, so much friendship towards me. Would to God *the King's errand might lie in the cadger's gait*, that I might have some better way of showing my feelings than merely by a letter of thanks, or this private memorandum of my gratitude. Public affairs look awkward. The present Ministry are neither Whig nor Tory, and, divested of the support of either of the great parties of the state, stand supported by the will of the sovereign alone. This is not constitutional, and though it may be a temporary augmentation of the prince's personal influence, yet it cannot but prove hurtful to the Crown upon the whole, by tending to throw that responsibility on him of which the law has deprived him. I pray to God I may be wrong, but, I think, an attempt to govern *par bascule*, by trimming

betwixt the opposite parties, is equally unsafe for the Crown and detrimental to the country, and cannot do for a long time. That with a neutral Administration this country, hard ruled at any time, can be long governed, I for one do not believe. God send the good King, to whom I owe so much, as safe and honourable extrication as the circumstances render possible." The dissolution of the Goderich Cabinet confirmed very soon these shrewd guesses; and Sir Walter anticipated nothing but good from the premiership of the Duke of Wellington.

The settlement of Charles Scott was rapidly followed by more than one fortunate incident in Sir Walter's literary and pecuniary history. The first *Tales of a Grandfather* appeared early in December, and their reception was more rapturous than that of any one of his works since *Ivanhoe*. He had solved for the first time the problem of narrating history so as at once to excite and gratify the curiosity of youth, and please and instruct the wisest of mature minds. The popularity of the book has grown with every year that has since elapsed, it is equally prized in the library, the boudoir, the school-room, and the nursery, it is adopted as the happiest of manuals, not only in Scotland, but wherever the English tongue is spoken; nay, it is to be seen in the hands of old and young all over the civilized world, and has, I have little doubt, extended the knowledge of Scottish history in quarters where little or no interest had ever before been awakened as to any other parts of that subject, except those immediately connected with Mary Stuart and the Chevalier. This success effectually rebuked the trepidation of the author's bookseller and printer, and inspired the former with new courage as to a step which he had for some time been meditating, and which had given rise to many a long and anxious discussion between him and Sir Walter.

The question as to the property of the *Life of Napoleon* and *Woodstock* having now been settled by the arbiter (Lord Newton) in favour of the author, the relative affairs of Sir Walter and the creditors of Constable were so simplified, that the trustee on that sequestered estate resolved to bring into the market, with the concurrence of Ballantyne's trustees, and without further delay, a variety of very valuable copyrights. This important sale comprised Scott's novels from *Waverley* to *Quentin Durward* inclusive, besides a majority of the shares of the *Poetical Works*.

Mr Cadell's family and private friends were extremely desirous that he should purchase part at least of these copyrights, and Sir Walter's were not less so that he should seize this last opportunity of recovering a share in the prime fruits of his genius. The relations by this time established between him and Cadell were those of strict confidence and kindness, and both saw well that the property would be comparatively lost, were it not secured, that thenceforth the whole should be managed as one unbroken concern. It was in the success of an uniform edition of the *Waverley Novels*, with prefaces and notes by the author, that both anticipated the means of finally extinguishing the debt of Ballantyne and Co; and, after some demur, the trustees of that house's creditors were wise enough to adopt their views. The result was, that the copyrights exposed to sale for behoof of Constable's creditors were purchased, one-half for Sir Walter, the other half for Cadell, at the price of £8,500—

sum which was considered large at the moment, but which the London competitors soon afterwards convinced themselves they ought to have outbid

The Diary says — "*December 17* — Sent off the new beginning of the *Chronicles* to Ballantyne. I hate cancels, they are a double labour Mr. Cowan, trustee for Constable's creditors, called in the morning by appointment, and we talked about the sale of the copyrights of *Waverley*, &c. It is to be hoped the high upset price fixed (£5,000) will

"Fright the fuds
Of the pock puds"

"*December 20* — Anent the copyrights — the pock-puds were not frightened by our high price They came on briskly, four or five bidders abreast, and went on till the lot was knocked down to Cadell at £8,500, a very large sum certainly, yet he has been offered profit on it already The activity of the contest serves to show the value of the property. On the whole I am greatly pleased with the acquisition"

Well might the "pockpuddings" — the English booksellers — rue their timidity on this day, but it was the most lucky one that ever came for Sir Walter Scott's creditors A dividend of six shillings in the pound was paid at this Christmas on their whole claims The result of their high-hearted debtor's exertions, between January, 1826, and January, 1828, was in all very nearly £40,000 No literary biographer, in all likelihood, will ever have such another fact to record The creditors unanimously passed a vote of thanks for the indefatigable industry which had achieved so much for their behoof

On returning to Abbotsford at Christmas, after completing these transactions, he says in his Diary — "My reflections in entering my own gate to-day were of a very different and more pleasing cast than those with which I left this place about six weeks ago I was then in doubt whether I should fly my country, or become avowedly bankrupt, and surrender up my library and household furniture, with the liferent of my estate, to sale. A man of the world will say I had better done so No doubt, had I taken this course at once, I might have employed the money I have made since the insolvency of Constable and Robinson's houses in compounding my debts But I could not have slept sound as I now can, under the comfortable impression of receiving the thanks of my creditors, and the conscious feeling of discharging my duty as a man of honour and honesty I see before me a long, tedious, and dark path, but it leads to stainless reputation If I die in the harrows, as is very likely, I shall die with honour, if I achieve my task, I shall have the thanks of all concerned, and the approbation of my own conscience. And so, I think, I can fairly face the return of Christmas Day"

And again, on the 31st December, he says —

"Looking back to the conclusion of 1826, I observe that the last year ended in trouble and sickness, with pressures for the present and gloomy prospects for the future The sense of a great privation so lately sustained, together with the very doubtful and clouded nature of my private affairs, pressed hard upon my mind I am now restored in constitution, and though I am still on troubled waters, yet I am rowing with the tide, and

less than the continuation of my exertions of 1827 may, with God's blessing, carry me successfully through 1828, when we may gain a more open sea, if not exactly a safe port Above all, my children are well

"For all these great blessings it becomes me well to be thankful to God, who, in His good time and good pleasure, sends us good as well as evil."

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE "OPUS MAGNUM"—FAIR MAID OF PERTH PUBLISHED—SECOND SERIES OF TALES OF A GRANDFATHER—ANNE OF GIERSTEIN PUBLISHED—THIRD SERIES OF TALES OF A GRANDFATHER, AND HISTORY OF SCOTLAND PUBLISHED.

WITH the exception of a few weeks occupied by an excursion to London, which business of various sorts had rendered necessary, the year 1828 was spent in the same assiduous labour as 1827. The commercial transaction completed at Christmas cleared the way for two undertakings, which would of themselves have been enough to supply desk-work in abundance, and Sir Walter appears to have scarcely passed a day on which something was not done for them. I allude to Cadell's plans of a new edition of the poetry, with biographical prefaces, and the still more extensive one of an uniform reprint of the novels, each to be introduced by an account of the hints on which it had been founded, and illustrated throughout by historical and antiquarian annotations. On this last, commonly mentioned in the Diary as the *opus magnum*, Sir Walter bestowed pains commensurate with its importance, and in the execution of the very delicate task which either scheme imposed, he has certainly displayed such a combination of frankness and modesty as entitles him to a high place in the short list of graceful autobiographers. True dignity is always simple, and perhaps true genius, of the highest class at least, is always humble. These operations took up much time, yet he laboured hard this year both as a novelist and a historian. He contributed, moreover, several articles to the Quarterly Review and the Bannatyne Club library, and to the Journal conducted by Mr Gillies, an excellent Essay on Mohere, this last being again a free gift to the editor.

But the first advertisement of 1828 was of a new order, and the announcement that the author of Waverley had *Sermons* in the press was received perhaps with as much incredulity in the clerical world as could have been excited among them by that of a romance from the Archbishop of Canterbury. A thin octavo volume, entitled "Religious Discourses by a Layman," and having "W S" at the foot of a short preface, did, however, issue in the course of the spring, and from the shop, that all might be in perfect keeping, of Mr Colburn, a bookseller then known almost exclusively as the standing purveyor of what is called "light reading"—novels of "fashionable life," and the like pretty ephemera. I am afraid that the "Religious Discourses," too, would, but for the author's name, have had a brief existence, but the history of their composition, besides sufficiently explaining the humility of these tracts in a literary as

well as a theological point of view, will, I hope, gratify most of my readers.

It may perhaps be remembered, that Sir Walter's *cicerone* over Waterloo, in August, 1815, was a certain Major Pryse Gordon, then on half-pay, and resident at Brussels. The acquaintance, until they met at Sir Frederick Adam's table, had been very slight, nor was it ever carried further; but the Major was exceedingly attentive during Scott's stay, and afterwards took some pains about collecting little reliques of the battle for Abbotsford. One evening the poet supped at his house, and there happened to sit next him the host's eldest son, then a lad of nineteen, whose appearance and situation much interested him. He had been destined for the Church of Scotland, but as he grew up, a deafness, which had come on him in boyhood, became worse and worse, and at length his friends feared that it must incapacitate him for the clerical function. He had gone to spend the vacation with his father, and Sir Frederick Adam, understanding how he was situated, offered him a temporary appointment as a clerk in the Commissariat, which he hoped to convert into a permanent one, in case the war continued. At the time of Scott's arrival that prospect was wellnigh gone, and the young man's infirmity, his embarrassment, and other things to which his own memorandum makes no allusion, excited the visitor's sympathy. Though there were lion-hunters of no small consequence in the party, he directed most of his talk into the poor clerk's ear-trumpet, and, at parting, begged him not to forget that he had a friend on Tweedside.

A couple of years elapsed before he heard anything more of Mr Gordon, who then sent him his father's little *spolia* of Waterloo, and accompanied them by a letter explaining his situation, and asking advice in a style which renewed and increased Scott's favourable impression. He had been dismissed from the Commissariat at the general reduction of our establishments, and was now hesitating whether he had better take up again his views as to the Kirk, or turn his eyes towards English orders, and in the meantime he was anxious to find some way of lightening to his parents, by his own industry, the completion of his professional education. There ensued a copious correspondence between him and Scott, who gave him on all points of his case most paternal advice, and accompanied his counsels with offers of pecuniary assistance, of which the young man rarely availed himself. At length he resolved on re-entering the Divinity Class at Aberdeen, and in due time was licensed by the Presbytery there as a preacher of the Gospel; but though with good connexions, for he was "sprung of Scotia's gentler blood," his deafness operated as a serious bar to his obtaining the incumbency of the parish. After several years had elapsed, he received a presentation; but the Provincial Synod pronounced his deafness an insuperable objection, and the case was referred to the General Assembly. That tribunal heard Mr. Gordon's cause maintained by all the skill and eloquence of Mr. Jeffrey, whose good offices had been secured by Scott's intervention, and they overruled the decision of the Presbytery. But Gordon, in the course of the discussion, gathered the conviction that a man almost literally stone-deaf could not discharge some of the highest duties of a parish priest in a satisfactory manner, and he with honourable firmness declined to take advantage of the judgment

of the Supreme Court. Meantime he had been employed, from the failure of John Ballantyne's health downwards, as the transcriber of the *Waverley MSS* for the press, in which capacity he displayed every quality that could endear an amanuensis to an author, and when the disasters of 1826 rendered it unnecessary for Scott to have his MS copied, he exerted himself to procure employment for Gordon in one of the Government offices in London. Being backed by the kindness of the late Duke of Gordon, his story found favour with the then Secretary of the Treasury, Mr Lushington, and Gordon was named assistant private secretary to that gentleman. The appointment was temporary, but he so pleased his chief that there was hope of better things by-and-bye. Such was his situation at Christmas, 1827, but that being his first Christmas in London, it was no wonder that he then discovered himself to have somewhat miscalculated about money matters. In a word, he knew not whither to look at the moment for extrication, until he be-thought him of the following little incident of his life at Abbotsford.

He was spending the autumn of 1824 there, daily copying the MS of *Redgauntlet*, and working at leisure hours on the catalogue of the library, when the family observed him to be labouring under some extraordinary depression of mind. It was just then that he had at length obtained the prospect of a living, and Sir Walter was surprised that this should not have exhilarated him. Gently sounding the trumpet, however, he discovered that the agitation of the question about the deafness had shaken his nerves—his scruples had been roused—his conscience was sensitive,—and he avowed that, though he thought, on the whole, he ought to go through with the business, he could not command his mind so as to prepare a couple of sermons which, unless he summarily abandoned his object, must be produced on a certain day—then near at hand—before his Presbytery. Sir Walter reminded him that his exercises when on trials for the probationership had given satisfaction, but nothing he could say was sufficient to re-brace Mr Gordon's spirits, and he at length exclaimed, with tears, that his pen was powerless,—that he had made fifty attempts, and saw nothing but failure and disgrace before him. Scott answered, "My good young friend, leave this matter to me—do you work away at the catalogue, and I'll write for you a couple of sermons that shall pass muster well enough at Aberdeen." Gordon assented with a sigh, and next morning Sir Walter gave him the MS of the "Religious Discourses." On reflection, Mr Gordon considered it quite impossible to produce them as his own, and he by-and-bye had written others for himself in a style creditable to his talents, though, from circumstances above explained, he never delivered them at Aberdeen. But the two Discourses of 1824 had remained in his hands, and it now occurred to him that, if Sir Walter would allow him to dispose of these to some bookseller, they might possibly bring a price that would float him over his little difficulties of Christmas.

Scott consented, and Gordon got more than he had ventured to expect for his MS.

Mr Gordon now occupies a permanent and respectable situation in Her Majesty's Stationery Office, and he concludes his communication to me with expressing his feeling that his prosperity "is all clearly traceable to the kindness of Sir Walter Scott."

In a letter to me about this affair of the Discourses, Sir Walter says, "Poor Gordon has got my leave to make a *hirk* and a *mill* of my *Sermons*—heaven save the mark! Help him, if you can, to the water of Pactolus and a swapping thirlage." The only entries in the Diary, which relate to the business are the following—"Dec 28—Huntly Gordon writes me in despair about £180 of debt which he has incurred. He wishes to publish two sermons which I wrote for him when he was taking orders, and he would get little money for them without my name. People may exclaim against the undesired and unwelcome zeal of him who stretched his hands to help the ark over with the best intentions, and cry sacrilege. And yet they will do me gross injustice, for I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society. Were we but to name the abolition of slavery and polygamy, how much has, in these two words, been granted to mankind in the lessons of our Saviour!"—January 10, 1828—Huntly Gordon has disposed of the two sermons to the bookseller, Colburn, for £250, well sold, I think, and to go forth immediately. The man is a puffing quack, but though I would rather the thing had not gone there, and far rather that it had gone nowhere, yet hang it! if it makes the poor lad easy, what need I fret about it! After all, there would be little grace in doing a good thing, if you did not suffer pain or inconvenience upon the score."

The next literary entry is this—"Mr Charles Heath, the engraver, invites me to take charge of a yearly publication called the Keepsake, of which the plates are beyond comparison beautiful, but the letterpress indifferent enough. He proposes £800 a year if I would become editor, and £400 if I would contribute from seventy to one hundred pages. I declined both, but told him I might give him some trifling thing or other. To become the stipendiary editor of a New Year's Gift Book is not to be thought of, nor could I agree to work regularly, for any quantity of supply, at such a publication. Even the pecuniary view is not flattering, though Mr Heath meant it should be so. One hundred of his close printed pages, for which he offers £400, are nearly equal to one volume of a novel. Each novel of three volumes brings £4,000, and I remain proprietor of the mine after the first ore is scooped out." The result of this negotiation with Mr. Heath was, that he received, for £500, the liberty of printing in his Keepsake the long-forgotten juvenile drama of the House of Aspen, with My Aunt Margaret's Mirror, and two other little tales, which had been omitted, at Ballantyne's entreaty, from the second Chronicles of Croftangry. But Sir Walter regretted having meddled in any way with the toyshop of literature, and would never do so again, though repeatedly offered very large sums—nor even when the motive of private regard was added, upon Mr Allan Cunningham's lending his name to one of these painted bladders.

In the same week that Mr Heath made his proposition, Sir Walter received another which he thus disposes of in his Diary—"I have an invitation from Messrs Saunders and Ottley, booksellers, offering me from £1,500 to £2,000 annually to conduct a journal, but I am their humble servant. I am too indolent to stand to that sort of work, and I must preserve the undisturbed use of my leisure, and possess my soul in

quiet A large income is not my object, I must clear my debts, and that is to be done by writing things of which I can retain the property Made my excuses accordingly "

In January, 1828, reprints both of the Grandfather's Tales and of the Life of Napoleon were called for, and both so suddenly, that the booksellers would fain have distributed the volumes among various printers in order to catch the demand Ballantyne heard of this with natural alarm, and Scott, in the case of the Napoleon, conceived that his own literary character was trifled with, as well as his old ally's interests On receiving James's first appeal—that as to the Grandfather's Stories, he wrote thus—I need scarcely add, with the desired effect.—

To Robert Cadell, Esq, Edinburgh

“Abbotsford, 3rd January, 1828

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“I find our friend James Ballantyne is very anxious about printing the new edition of the Tales, which I hope you will allow him to do, unless extreme haste be an extreme object. I need not remind you that we three are like the shipwrecked crew of a vessel, cast upon a desolate island, and fitting up out of the remains of a gallant bark such a cock-boat as may transport us to some more hospitable shore Therefore, we are bound by the strong tie of common misfortune to help each other, in so far as the claim of self-preservation will permit, and I am happy to think the plank is large enough to float us all

“Besides my feelings for my own old friend and schoolfellow, with whom I have shared good and bad weather for so many years, I must also remember that as in your own case, his friends have made great exertions to support him in the printing office, under an implied hope and trust that these publications would take in ordinary cases their usual direction It is true no engagement was or could be proposed to this effect, but it was a reasonable expectation which influenced kind and generous men, and I incline to pay every respect to it in my power

“Messrs Longman really keep matters a little too quiet for my convenience The next thing they may tell me is, that Napoleon must go to press instantly to a dozen of printers I must boot and saddle, off and away at a fortnight's warning Now this I neither can nor will do My character as a man of letters is deeply interested in giving a complete revisal of that work, and I wish to have time to do so without being hurried Yours very truly,

“W S”

The following specimens of his “skirmishes,” as he used to call them, with Ballantyne, while the Fair Maid of Perth was in hand, are in keeping with this amiable picture —

“MY DEAR JAMES,—I return the proofs of tales, and send some leaves, copy of St Valentine's Pray get on with *this*, in case we should fall through again When the press does not follow me, I get on slowly and ill, and put myself in mind of Jamie Balfour, who could run when he could not stand still We *must* go on or stop altogether Yours,” &c, &c

“I think you are hypercritical in your commentary I counted the hours with accuracy. In the morning the citizens went to Kinfauns and

returned This puts over the hour of noon, then the dinner-hour Afterwards, and when the King has had his devotions in private, comes all the scene in the courtyard The sun sets at half-past five on the 14th February, and if we suppose it to be within an hour of evening, it was surely time for a woman who had a night to put over, to ask where she should sleep This is the explanation, apply it as you please to the text, for you who see the doubt can best clear it Yours truly," &c

"I cannot afford to be merciful to Master Oliver Proudfoot, although I am heartily glad there is any one of the personages sufficiently interesting to make you care whether he lives or dies But it would cost my cancelling half a volume, and rather than do so, I would, like the valiant Baron of Clackmannan, kill the whole characters, the author, and the printer Besides, *entre nous*, the resurrection of Athelstane was a botch It struck me when I was reading Ivanhoe over the other day.

"I value your criticism as much as ever, but the worst is, my faults are better known to myself than to you Tell a young beauty that she wears an unbecoming dress, or an ill-fashioned ornament, or speaks too loud, or commits any other mistake which she can correct, and she will do so, if she has sense and a good opinion of your taste. But tell a fading beauty that her hair is getting grey, her wrinkles apparent, her gait heavy, and that she has no business in a ball-room but to be ranged against the wall as an evergreen, and you will afflict the poor old lady, without rendering her any service She knows all that better than you I am sure the old lady in question takes pain enough at her toilette, and gives you, her trusty *servante*, enough of trouble. Yours truly, W S "

These notes to the printer appear to have been written at Abbotsford during the holidays

"February 17 —A hard day of work, being, I think, eight pages* before dinner I cannot, I am sure, tell if it is worth marking down, that yesterday, at dinner-time, I was strangely haunted by what I would call the sense of pre-existence—viz, a confused idea that nothing that passed was said for the first time, that the same topics had been discussed, and the same persons had stated the same opinions on them It is true there might have been some ground for recollections, considering that three at least of the company were old friends, and had kept much company together, that is, Justice-Clerk, [Lord] Abercromby, and I. But the sensation was so strong as to resemble what is called a *mirage* in the desert, or a caleutire on board of ship, when lakes are seen in the desert, and sylvan landscapes in the sea It was very distressing yesterday, and brought to my mind the fancies of Bishop Berkely about an ideal world There was a vile sense of want of reality in all I did and said It made me gloomy and out of spirits, though I flatter myself this was not observed The bodily feeling which most resembles this unpleasant hallucination is the giddy state which follows profuse bleeding, when one feels as if he were walking on feather beds and could not find a secure footing I think the stomach has something to do with it I drank several glasses of wine, but these only augmented the disorder I did not find the *in vino veritas*

* i.e., Forty pages of print, or very nearly.

of the philosophers Something of this insane feeling remains to-day, but a trifle only"

Sir Walter finished his novel by the end of March, and immediately set out for London, where the last budget of proof-sheets reached him. The Fair Maid was, and continues to be, highly popular, and though never classed with his performances of the first file, it has undoubtedly several scenes equal to what the best of them can show, and is on the whole a work of brilliant variety and most lively interest. Though the Introduction of 1830 says a good deal on the most original character, that of Connochar, the reader may not be sorry to have one paragraph on that subject from the Diary—"December 5, 1827—The fellow that swam the Tay, and escaped, would be a good ludicrous character. But I have a mind to try him in the serious line of tragedy. Miss Bailie has made her Ethling a coward by temperament, and a hero when touched by filial affection. Suppose a man's nerves, supported by feelings of honour, or say by the spur of jealousy, sustaining him against constitutional timidity to a certain point, then suddenly giving way, I think something tragic might be produced. James Ballantyne's criticism is too much moulded upon the general taste of novels to admit (I fear) this species of reasoning. But what can one do? I am hard up as far as imagination is concerned, yet the world calls for novelty. Well, I'll try my brave coward or cowardly brave man. *Valeat quantum*."

The most careful critic that has handled this tale, while he picks many holes in the plot, estimates the characters very highly. Of the glee-maiden he well says "Louise is a delightful sketch. Nothing can be more exquisite than the manner in which her story is partly told and partly hinted, or than the contrast between her natural and her professional character," and after discussing at some length Rothsay, Henbane, Ramorney, &c, &c, he comes to Connochar.

"This character," says Mr Senior, "is perfectly tragic, neither too bad for sympathy, nor so good as to render his calamity revolting, but its great merit is the boldness with which we are called upon to sympathize with a deficiency which is generally the subject of unmitigated scorn. It is impossible not to feel the deepest commiseration for a youth cursed by nature with extreme sensibility both to shame and to fear, suddenly raised from a life of obscurity and peace, to head a confederacy of warlike savages, and forced immediately afterwards to elect, before the eyes of thousands, between a frightful death and an ignominious escape."

I alluded, in an early part of these Memoirs, to a circumstance in Sir Walter's conduct which it was painful to mention, and added, that in advanced life he himself spoke of it with a deep feeling of contrition. Talking over this character of Connochar, just before the book appeared, he told me the unhappy fate of his brother Daniel, and how he had declined to be present at his funeral, or wear mourning for him. He added, "My secret motive, in this attempt, was to perform a sort of expiation to my poor brother's manes. I have now learned to have more tolerance and compassion than I had in those days." I said he put me in mind of Samuel Johnson's standing bareheaded, in the last year of his life, on the market-place of Uttoxeter, by way of penance for a piece of juvenile irreverence towards his father. "Well, no matter," said he, "perhaps that's not the worst thing in the Doctor's story."*

* See Croker's Boswell, octavo edition, Vol. V. p. 288.

Sir Walter remained at this time six weeks in London. His eldest son's regiment was stationed at Hampton Court, the second had recently taken his desk at the Foreign Office, and was living at his sister's in the Regent's Park—he had thus looked forward to a happy meeting with all his family—but he encountered scenes of sickness and distress, in consequence of which I saw but little of him in general society. I shall cull a few notices from his private volume, which, however, he now opened much less regularly than formerly, and which offers a total blank for the latter half of the year 1828.

"Regent's Park, April 17.—Made up my journal, which had fallen something behind. In this phantasmagorical place the objects of the day come and depart like shadows. Went to Murray's, where I met Mr Jacob, the great economist. He is proposing a mode of supporting the poor, by compelling them to labour under a species of military discipline. I see no objection to it, only it will make a rebellion to a certainty, and the tribes of Jacob will cut Jacob's throat.

"Canning's conversion from popular opinions was strangely brought round. While he was studying in the Temple, and rather entertaining revolutionary opinions, Godwin sent to say that he was coming to breakfast with him, to speak on a subject of the highest importance. Canning knew little of him, but received his visit, and learned to his astonishment that in expectation of a new order of things, the English Jacobins designed to place him, Canning, at the head of their revolution. He was much struck, and asked time to think what course he should take, and having thought the matter over, he went to Mr Pitt, and made the Anti-Jacobin confession of faith, in which he persevered until — Canning himself mentioned this to Sir W. Knighton upon occasion of giving a place in the Charterhouse of some ten pounds a year to Godwin's brother. He could scarce do less for one who had offered him the dictator's curule chair.

"April 22 — Sophia left this to take down poor Johnnie to Brighton. I fear—I fear—but we must hope the best. Anne went with her sister.

"Lockhart and I dined with Sotheby, where we met a large party, the orator of which was that extraordinary man Coleridge. After eating a hearty dinner, during which he spoke not a word, he began a most learned harangue on the Samothracian Mysteries, which he regards as affording the germ of all tales about fairies past, present, and to come. He then diverged to Homer, whose *Iliad* he considered as a collection of poems by different authors, at different times during a century. Morritt, a zealous worshipper of the old bard, was incensed at a system which would turn him into a polytheist, gave battle with keenness, and was joined by Sotheby. Mr Coleridge behaved with the utmost complaisance and temper, but relaxed not from his exertions. 'Zounds, I was never so bethumped with words.' Morritt's impatience must have cost him an extra sixpenceworth of snuff.

"May 9 — This day, at the request of Sir William Knighton, I sat at Northcote, who is to introduce himself in the same piece in the act of printing me, like some pictures of the Venetian school. The artist is an old man, low in stature, and bent with years—fourscore at least. But the eye is quick and the countenance noble. A pleasant companion, familiar with recollections of Sir Joshua, Samuel Johnson, Burke, Gold-

smith, &c. His account of the last confirms all that we have heard of his oddities.

"May 11—Another long sitting to the old Wizard Northcote. He really resembles an animated mummy. Dined with His Majesty in a very private party, five or six only being present. I was received most kindly, as usual. It is impossible to conceive a more friendly manner than that His Majesty used towards me. I spoke to Sir William Knighton about the dedication of the collected novels, and he says it will be highly well taken *.

"May 19—Dined by command with the Duchess of Kent. I was very kindly recognized by Prince Leopold, and presented to the little Princess Victoria—I hope they will change her name—the heir-apparent to the crown as things now stand. How strange that so large and fine a family as that of his late Majesty should have died off, or decayed into old age, with so few descendants! Prince George of Cumberland is, they say, a fine boy about nine years old, a bit of a Pickle. This little lady is educating with much care, and watched so closely that no busy maid has a moment to whisper, 'You are heir of England.' I suspect if we could dissect the little heart, we should find that some pigeon or other bird of the air had carried the matter. She is fair, like the Royal Family, the Duchess herself very pleasing and affable in her manners. I sat by Mr Spring Rice, a very agreeable man. There were also Charles Wynn and his lady, and the evening, for a Court evening, went agreeably off. I am commanded for two days by Prince Leopold, but will send excuses.

"May 25—After a morning of letter-writing, leave-taking, papers destroying, and God knows what trumpery, Sophia and I set out for Hampton Court, carrying with us the following lions and honesses: Samuel Rogers, Tom Moore, Wordsworth, with wife and daughter. We were very kindly and properly received by Walter and his wife, and had a very pleasant day. At parting Rogers gave me a gold-mounted pair of glasses which I will not part with in a hurry. I really like S R, and have always found him most friendly."

This is the last London entry.

On the afternoon of the 28th of May, Sir Walter started for the north. He rested at Carlisle. "A sad place," says the Diary, "in my domestic remembrances, since here I married my poor Charlotte. She is gone, and I am following—faster, perhaps, than I wot off. It is something to have lived and loved, and our poor children are so hopeful and affectionate, that it chastens the sadness attending the thoughts of our separation. My books being finished, I lighted on an odd volume of the Gentleman's Magazine, a work in which, as in a pawnbroker's shop, much of real curiosity and value are stowed away amid the frippery and trumpery of those reverend old gentlewomen who were the regular correspondents of Mr Urban."

His companion wrote thus a day or two afterwards to her sister. "Early in the morning before we started, papa took me with him to the cathedral. This he had often done before, but he said he must stand once more on the spot where he married poor mamma. After that we went to the castle, where a new showman went through the old trick of pointing

The *magnum opus* was dedicated to King George IV.

out Fergus MacIvor's *very* dungeon. Peveril said, 'Indeed? Are you quite sure, sir?' And on being told there could be no doubt, was troubled with a fit of coughing, which ended in a laugh. The man seemed exceeding indignant; so when papa moved on, I whispered who it was. I wish you had seen the man's start, and how he stared and bowed as he parted from us, and then rammed his keys into his pocket, and went off at a hand-gallop to warn the rest of the garrison. But the carriage was ready, and we escaped a row."

They reached Abbotsford that night, and a day or two afterwards Edinburgh, where Sir Walter was greeted with the satisfactory intelligence that his plans as to the *opus magnum* had been considered at a meeting of his trustees, and approved *in toto*. As the scheme inferred a large outlay on drawings and engravings, and otherwise, this decision had been looked for with much anxiety by him and Mr Cadell. He says, "I trust it will answer, yet who can warrant the continuance of popularity? Old Nattali Corri, who entered into many projects, and could never set the sails of a windmill to catch the *aura popularis*, used to say he believed that, were he to turn baker, it would put bread out of fashion. I have had the better luck to dress my sails to every wind; and so blow on, good wind, and spin round, whirling!" The Corri here alluded to was an unfortunate adventurer, who, among many other wild schemes, tried to set up an Italian Opera at Edinburgh.

The Diary for the next month records the usual meeting at Blair-Adam, but nothing worth quoting that was done or said, except, perhaps, these two scraps:—

"*Salutation of two old Scottish Lands*—'Ye're maist obedient hummil servant, Tannachy-Tulloch' 'Your nain man, Kilsplindie'

"*Hereditary descent in the Highlands* A clergyman showed John Thomson the island of Inchmachome, on the Port of Monteth, and pointed out the boatman as a remarkable person, the representative of the hereditary gardeners of the Earls of Monteth, while these Earls existed. His son, a puggish boy, follows up the theme. 'Feyther, when Donald MacCorkindale dees will not the family be extinct?' *Father* 'No; I believe there is a man in Balquhadder who takes up the succession'."

During the remainder of this year, as I already mentioned, Sir Walter never opened his "locked book." Whether in Edinburgh or the country, his life was such, that he describes himself, in several letters, as having become "a writing automaton." He had completed, by Christmas, the Second Series of Tales on Scottish History, and made considerable progress in another novel—Anne of Geierstein, he had also drawn up for the Quarterly Review his article on Mr Morier's Hajji Baba in England, and that delightful one on Sir Humphry Davy's *Salmonia*, which, like those on Planting and Gardening, abounds in sweet episodes of personal reminiscence, and, whenever he had not proof-sheets to press him, his hours were bestowed on the *opus magnum*.

Sir Walter having expressed a wish to consult me about some of his affairs, I went down to Abbotsford at Christmas, and found him apparently well in health (except that he suffered from rheumatism), and enjoying the society as usual of the Fergusons, with the welcome addition of Mr Morritt and Sir James Stuart of Allanbank, a gentleman whose

masterly pencil had often been employed on subjects from his poetry and novels, and whose conversation on art (like that of Sir George Beaumont and Mr Scrope), being devoid of professional pedantries and jealousies, was always particularly delightful to him. One snowy morning he gave us sheets of *Anne of Geierstem*, extending to, I think, about a volume and a half, and we read them together in the library, while he worked in the adjoining room, and occasionally dropt in upon us to hear how we were pleased. All were highly gratified with those vivid and picturesque pages, and both Morratt and Stuart, being familiar with the scenery of Switzerland, could not sufficiently express their astonishment at the felicity with which he had divined its peculiar character, and outdone by the force of imagination all the efforts of a thousand actual tourists. Such approbation was of course very acceptable. I had seldom seen him more gently and tranquilly happy.

Sir Walter's operations appear to have been interrupted ever and anon, during January and February, 1829, in consequence of severe distress in the household of his printer, whose warm affections were not, as in his own case, subjected to the authority of a stoical will. On the 14th of February the Diary says — "The letters I received were numerous, and craved answers, yet the third vol is getting on *hooly and fairly*. I am twenty leaves before the printer, but Ballantyne's wife is ill, and it is his nature to indulge apprehensions of the worst, which incapacitates him for labour. I cannot help regarding this amiable weakness of the mind with something too nearly allied to contempt." On the 17th — "I received the melancholy news that James Ballantyne has lost his wife. With his domestic habits the blow is irremediable. What can he do, poor fellow, at the head of such a family of children? I should not be surprised if he were to give way to despair." James was not able to appear at his wife's funeral, and thus Scott viewed with something more than pity. Next morning, however, says the Diary — "Ballantyne came in, to my surprise, about twelve o'clock. He was very serious, and spoke as if he had some idea of sudden and speedy death. He mentioned that he had named Cadell, Cowan, young Hughes, and his brother to be his trustees with myself. He has settled to go to the country, poor fellow!"

Ballantyne retired accordingly to some sequestered place near Jedburgh, and there, indulging his grief in solitude, fell into a condition of religious melancholy, from which I think he never wholly recovered. Scott regarded this as weakness, and in part at least as wilful weakness, and addressed to him several letters of strong remonstrance and rebuke. I have read them, but do not possess them, nor perhaps would it have been proper for me to print them. In writing of the case to myself, he says, "I have a sore grievance in poor Ballantyne's increasing lowness of heart, and I fear he is sinking rapidly into the condition of a religious dreamer. His retirement from Edinburgh was the worst advised scheme in the world. I in vain reminded him, that when our Saviour Himself was to be led into temptation, the first thing the Devil thought of was to get Him into the wilderness." Ballantyne, after a few weeks, resumed his place in the printing office, but he addicted himself more and more to what his friend considered as erroneous and extravagant notions of

religious doctrine; and I regret to say that in this difference originated a certain alienation, not of affection, but of confidence, which was visible to every near observer of their subsequent intercourse. Towards the last, indeed, they saw but little of each other. I suppose, however, it is needless to add that, down to the very last, Scott watched over Ballantyne's interests with undiminished attention.

I must give a few more extracts from the Diary, for the Spring Session, during which Anne of Geierstein was finished, and the prospectus of the *opus magnum* issued.

DIARY. "Feb 23—Anne and I dined at Skene's, where we met Mr. and Mrs. George Forbes, Colonel and Mrs. Blair, George Bell, &c. The party was a pleasant one. Colonel Blair told us that at the commencement of the battle of Waterloo there was some trouble to prevent the men from breaking their ranks. He expostulated with one man—'Why, my good fellow, you cannot propose to beat the French alone? You had better keep your ranks.' The man, who was one of the 71st, returned to his place, saying, 'I believe you are right, sir, but I am a man of a very hot temper.' There was much *bonhomme* in the reply.

"March 4—At four o'clock arrives Mr. Cadell, with his horn charged with good news. The prospectus of the *magnum*, although issued only a week, has produced such a demand among the trade, that he thinks he must add a large number of copies, that the present edition of 7,000 may be increased to meet the demand, he talks of raising it to 10,000 or 12,000. If so, I shall have a powerful and constant income to bear on my unfortunate debts for several years to come, and may fairly hope to put every claim in a secure way of payment. Landlaw dined with me, and, poor fellow, was as much elated with the news as I am, for it is not of a nature to be kept secret. I hope I shall have him once more at Kaeside, to debate, as we used to do, on religion and politics.

"March 5—I am admitted a member of the Maitland Club of Glasgow, a society on the principle of the Roxburgh and Bannatyne. What a tail of the alphabet I should draw after me were I to sign with the indications of the different societies I belong to, beginning with President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and ending with umpire of the Six-feet-high Club!

"March 6—Made some considerable additions to the Appendix to General Preface. I am in the sentiments towards the public that the buffoon player expresses towards his patron—

"Go, tell my good lord, said this modest young man,
If he will but invite me to dinner,
I'll be as diverting as ever I can—
I will, on the faith of a sinner";

"I will multiply the notes, therefore, when there is a chance of giving pleasure and variety. There is a stronger gleam of hope on my affairs than has yet touched on them; it is not steady or certain, but it is bright and conspicuous. Ten years may last with me, though I have but little chance of it.

"March 7—Sent away proofs. This extrication of my affairs, though only a Pisgah prospect, occupies my mind more than is fitting, but

without some such hopes I must have felt like one of the victims of the wretch Burke, struggling against a smothering weight on my bosom, till nature could endure it no longer

"*March 8*—Ballantyne, by a letter of this morning, totally condemns Anne of Geierstein Third volume nearly finished—a pretty thing, truly, for I shall be expected to do all over again. Great dishonour in this, as Trinculo says, besides an infinite loss Sent for Cadell to attend me to-morrow morning, that we may consult about this business

"*March 9*—Cadell came to breakfast. We resolved in privy council to refer the question whether Anne of G——n be seaworthy or not to further consideration, which, as the book cannot be published, at any rate, during the full rage of the Catholic question, may be easily managed

"Went about one o'clock to the castle, where we saw the auld murderess, Mons Meg, brought up in solemn procession to re-occupy her ancient place on the Argyle battery The day was cold, but serene, and I think the ladies must have been cold enough, not to mention the Celts, who turned out upon the occasion, under the leading of Cluny Macpherson, a fine spirited lad Mons Meg is a monument of our pride and poverty The size is enormous, but six smaller guns would have been made at the same expense, and done six times as much execution as she could have done There was immense interest taken in the show by the people of the town, and the numbers who crowded the Castle Hill had a magnificent appearance About thirty of our Celts attended in costume, and as there was a Highland regiment for duty, with dragoons and artillerymen, the whole made a splendid show The style in which the last manned and wrought the windlass which raised old Meg, weighing seven or eight tons, from her temporary carriage to that which has been her basis for many years, was singularly beautiful as a combined exhibition of skill and strength My daughter had what might have proved a frightful accident Some rockets were let off, one of which lighted upon her head, and set her bonnet on fire. She neither screamed nor ran, but quietly permitted Charles Sharpe to extinguish the fire, which he did with great coolness and dexterity All who saw her, especially the friendly Celts, gave her merit for her steadiness, and said she came of good blood. My own courage was not tried, for being at some distance escorting the beautiful and lively Countess of Hopetoun, I did not hear of the accident till it was over"

Anne of Geierstein was finished before breakfast on the 29th of April; and his Diary mentions that immediately after breakfast he began his Compendium of Scottish History for Dr Lardner's Cyclopædia. We have seen that when the proprietors of that work, in July, 1828, offered him £500 for an abstract of Scottish History in one volume, he declined the proposal They subsequently offered £700 and this was accepted, but though he began the task under the impression that he should find it a heavy one, he soon warmed to the subject, and pursued it with cordial zeal and satisfaction One volume, it by-and-bye appeared, would never do—in his own phrase "he must have elbow-room"—and I believe it was finally settled that he should have £1,500 for the book in two volumes, of which the first was published before the end of this year

Anne of Geierstein came out about the middle of May, and this, which

may be almost called the last work of his imaginative genius, was received at least as well—(out of Scotland, that is)—as the Fair Maid of Perth had been, or indeed as any novel of his after the Crusaders. I partake very strongly, I am aware, in the feeling which most of my own countrymen have little shame in avowing, that no novel of his, where neither scenery nor character is Scottish, belongs to the same pre-eminent class with those in which he paints and peoples his native landscape. I have confessed that I cannot rank even his best English romances with such creations as *Waverley* and *Old Mortality*, far less can I believe that posterity will attach similar value to this *Maid of the Mist*. Its pages, however, display in undiminished perfection all the skill and grace of the mere artist, with occasional outbreaks of the old poetic spirit, more than sufficient to remove the work to an immeasurable distance from any of its order produced in this country in our own age. Indeed, the various play of fancy in the combination of persons and events, and the airy liveliness of both imagery and diction, may well justify us in applying to the author what he beautifully says of his *King René*—

“A mirthful man he was, the snows of age
Fell, but they did not chill him Gaiety,
Even in life's closing, touch'd his teeming brain
With such wild visions as the setting sun
Raises in front of some hoar glacier,
Painting the bleak ice with a thousand hues.”

It is a common saying that there is nothing so distinctive of *genius* as the retention, in advanced years, of the capacity to depict the feelings of youth with all their original glow and purity. But I apprehend this blessed distinction belongs to, and is the just reward of, virtuous genius only. In the case of extraordinary force of imagination, combined with the habitual indulgence of a selfish mood,—not combined, that is to say, with the genial temper of mind and thought which God and Nature design to be kept alive in man by those domestic charities, out of which the other social virtues so easily spring, and with which they find such endless links of interdependence, in this unhappy case, which none who has studied the biography of genius can pronounce to be a rare one, the very power which Heaven bestowed seems to become, as old age darkens, the sternest avenger of its own misapplication. The retrospect of life is converted by its energy into one wide blackness of desolate regret, and whether this breaks out in the shape of a rueful contemptuousness or a sarcastic mockery of tone, the least drop of the poison is enough to paralyse all attempts at awakening sympathy by fanciful delineations of love and friendship. Perhaps Scott has nowhere painted such feelings more deliciously than in those very scenes of *Anne of Geierstein*, which offer every now and then, in some incidental circumstance or reflection, the best evidence that they are drawn by a grey-headed man. The whole of his own life was too present to his wonderful memory to permit of his brooding with exclusive partiality, whether painfully or pleasurably, on any one portion or phasis of it, and besides, he was always living over again in his children, young at heart whenever he looked on them, and the world that was opening on them and their friends. But above all, he had a firm belief in the future re-union of those whom death has parted.

He lost two more of his old intimates about this time—Mr. Terry in June; and Mr. Shortreed in the beginning of July.

His Diary has few more entries for this twelvemonth. Besides the volume of History for Dr. Lardner's collection, he had ready for publication by December the last of the *Scottish Series* of Tales of a Grandfather, and had made great progress in the prefaces and notes for Cadell's *opus magnum*. He had also overcome various difficulties which for a time interrupted the twin scheme of an illustrated edition of his poems, and one of these in a manner so agreeable to him and honourable to the other party, that I must make room for the two following letters —.

"Shandwick Place, 4th June, 1829

"MY DEAR LOCKHART,—

"I have a commission for you to execute for me, which I shall deliver in a few words. I am now in possession of my own copyrights of every kind excepting a few things in Longman's hands, and which I am offered on very fair terms—and a fourth share of *Marmion*, which is in the possession of our friend Murray. Now, I should consider it a great favour if Mr. Murray would part with it at what he may consider as a fair rate, and would be most happy to show my sense of obligation by assisting his views and speculations as far as lies in my power. I wish you could learn as soon as you can Mr. Murray's sentiments on this subject, as they would weigh with me in what I am about to arrange as to the collected edition. The *Waverley Novels* are doing very well indeed.

"I put you to a shilling's expense, as I wish a speedy answer to the above query. I am always, with love to Sophia, affectionately yours,
"WALTER SCOTT"

"Albemarle Street, June 8, 1829

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"Mr. Lockhart has this moment communicated your letter respecting my fourth share of the copyright of *Marmion*. I have already been applied to by Messrs. Constable, and by Messrs. Longman, to know what sum I would sell this share for, but so highly do I estimate the honour of being even in so small a degree the publisher of the author of the poem, that no pecuniary consideration whatever can induce me to part with it.

"But there is a consideration of another kind, which until now I was not aware of, which would make it painful to me if I were to retain it a moment longer. I mean the knowledge of its being required by the author, into whose hands it was spontaneously resigned in the same instant that I read his request.

"This share has been profitable to me fiftyfold beyond what either publisher or author could have anticipated, and, therefore, my returning it on such an occasion you will, I trust, do me the favour to consider in no other light than as a mere act of grateful acknowledgment for benefits already received by, my dear Sir, your obliged and faithful servant,

"JOHN MURRAY"

The success of the collective novels was far beyond what either Sir Walter or Mr. Cadell had ventured to anticipate. Before the close of

1829 eight volumes had been issued, and the monthly sale had reached as high as 35,000. Should this go on, there was, indeed, every reason to hope that, coming in aid of undiminished industry in the preparation of new works, it would wipe off all his load of debt in the course of a very few years. And during the autumn (which I spent near him) it was most agreeable to observe the effects of the prosperous intelligence which every succeeding month brought upon his spirits.

This was the more needed, that at this time his eldest son, who had gone to the south of France on account of some unpleasant symptoms in his health, did not at first seem to profit rapidly by the change of climate. He feared that the young man was not quite so attentive to the advice of his physicians as he ought to have been, and in one of many letters on this subject, after mentioning some of Cadell's good news as to the great affair, he says — "I have wrought hard, and so far successfully. But I tell you, plainly, my dear boy, that if you permit your health to decline from want of attention, I have not strength of mind enough to exert myself in these matters as I have hitherto been doing." Happily Major Scott was, ere long, restored to his usual state of health and activity.

Sir Walter himself, too, besides the usual allowance of rheumatism, and other lesser ailments, had an attack that season of a nature which gave his family great alarm, and which for some days he himself regarded with the darkest prognostications * * * * He says in his Diary for June 3rd — "The ugly symptom still continues. Dr Ross does not make much of it, and I think he is apt to look grave. Either way I am firmly resolved. I wrote in the morning. The Court kept me till near two, and then home comes I. Afternoon and evening were spent as usual. In the evening Dr Ross ordered me to be cupped, an operation which I only knew from its being practised by those eminent medical practitioners the barbers of Bagdad. It is not painful, and, I think, resembles a giant twisting about your flesh between his finger and thumb." After this he felt better, he said, than he had done for years before, but there can be little doubt that the natural evacuation was a very serious symptom. It was, in fact, the precursor of apoplexy. In telling the Major of his recovery, he says — "The sale of the novels is prodigious. If it last but a few years, it will clear my feet of old incumbrances, nay, perhaps, enable me to talk a word to our friend Nicol Milne.

"But old ships must expect to get out of commission,
Nor again to weigh anchor with *yo heave ho!*"

"However that may be, I should be happy to die a free man; and I am sure you will all be kind to poor Anne, who will miss me most."

The close of the autumn was embittered by a sudden and most unexpected deprivation. Apparently in the fullest enjoyment of health and vigour, Thomas Purdie leaned his head one evening on the table, and dropped asleep. This was nothing uncommon in a hard-working man, and his family went and came about him for several hours, without taking any notice. When supper came they tried to awaken him, and found that life had been for some time extinct. Far different from other

years, Sir Walter seemed impatient to get away from Abbotsford to Edinburgh. "I have lost," he writes (4th November) to Cadell, "my old and faithful servant, my factotum, and am so much shocked that I really wish to be quit of the country and safe in town. I have this day laid him in the grave. This has prevented my answering your letters."

The grave, close to the abbey at Melrose, is surmounted by a modest monument.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AUCHINDRANE, OR THE AYRSHIRE TRAGEDY—PARALYTIC SEIZURE—
DEMONOLOGY AND WITCHCRAFT—SECOND DIVIDEND TO CREDITORS—
—SECOND PARALYTIC ATTACK.

SIR WALTER'S reviewal of the early parts of Mr. Pitcairn's Ancient Criminal Trials had, of course, much gratified the editor, who sent him, on his arrival in Edinburgh, the proof-sheets of the number then in hand, and directed his attention particularly to its details on the extraordinary case of Mure of Auchindrane, A D 1611. Scott was so much interested with these documents that he resolved to found a dramatic sketch on their terrible story, and the result was a composition far superior to any of his previous attempts of that nature. Indeed, there are several passages in his Ayrshire Tragedy—especially that where the murdered corpse floats upright in the wake of the assassin's bark—(an incident suggested by a lamentable chapter in Lord Nelson's history)—which may bear comparison with anything but Shakespeare. Yet I doubt whether the prose narrative of the preface be not, on the whole, more dramatic than the versified scenes. It contains, by the way, some very striking allusions to the recent atrocities of Gill's Hill and the West Port. This piece was published in a thin octavo early in the year, and the beautiful Essays on Ballad Poetry, composed with a view to a collective edition of all his poetical works in small cheap volumes, were about the same time attached to the octavo edition then on sale, the state of stock not as yet permitting the new issue to be begun.

Sir Walter was now to pay the penalty of his unparalleled toils. On the 15th of February, about two o'clock in the afternoon, he returned from the Parliament House apparently in his usual state, and found an old acquaintance, Miss Young of Hawick, waiting to show him some MS memoirs of her father (a dissenting minister of great worth and talents), which he had undertaken to revise and correct for the press. The old lady sat by him for half an hour while he seemed to be occupied with her papers, at length he rose, as if to dismiss her, but sank down again—a slight convulsion agitating his features. After a few minutes he got up and staggered to the drawing-room, where Anne Scott and my sister Violet Lockhart were sitting. They rushed to meet him, but he fell at all his length on the floor ere they could reach him. He remained speechless for about ten minutes, by which time a surgeon had arrived and bled him. He was cupped again in the evening, and gradually recovered possession of speech and of all his faculties in so far that, the occurrence being kept quiet, when he appeared abroad again after a short interval, people in general do not seem to have observed any serious

change. He submitted to the utmost severity of regimen, tasting nothing but pulse and water for some weeks, and the alarm of his family and intimate friends subsided. By-and-bye he again mingled in society much as usual, and seems to have *almost* persuaded himself that the attack had proceeded merely from the stomach, though his letters continued ever and anon to drop hints that the symptoms resembled apoplexy or paralysis. When we recollect that both his father and his elder brother died of paralysis, and consider the terrible violences of agitation and exertion to which Sir Walter had been subjected during the four preceding years, the only wonder is that this blow (which had, I suspect, several indistinct harbingers) was deferred so long, there can be none that it was soon followed by others of the same description.

He struggled manfully, however, against his malady, and during 1830 covered almost as many sheets with his MS as in 1829. About March I find, from his correspondence with Ballantyne, that he was working regularly at his *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* for Murray's Family Library, and also on a Fourth Series of the *Tales of a Grandfather*—the subject being French history. Both of these books were published by the end of the year, and the former contains many passages worthy of his best day—little snatches of picturesque narrative and the like—in fact, transcripts of his own familiar fireside stories. The shrewdness with which evidence is sifted on legal cases attests, too, that the main reasoning faculty remained unshaken. But, on the whole, these works can hardly be submitted to a strict ordeal of criticism. There is in both a cloudiness both of words and arrangement. Nor can I speak differently of the second volume of his *Scottish History* for Lardner's *Cyclopædia*, which was published in May. His very pretty review of Mr Southey's Life and edition of Bunyan was done in August—about which time his recovery seems to have reached its acme.

In the course of the Spring Session, circumstances rendered it highly probable that Sir Walter's resignation of his place as Clerk of Session might be acceptable to the Government, and it is not surprising that he should have, on the whole, been pleased to avail himself of this opportunity.

His Diary was resumed in May, and continued at irregular intervals for the rest of the year, but its contents are commonly too medical for quotation.

On the 26th of June Sir Walter heard of the death of King George IV. with the regret of a devoted and obliged subject. He had received almost immediately before two marks of His Majesty's kind attention. Understanding that his retirement from the Court of Session was at hand, Sir William Knighton suggested to the King that Sir Walter might henceforth be more frequently in London, and that he might very fitly be placed at the head of a new commission for examining and editing the MSS collections of the exiled Princes of the House of Stuart, which had come into the King's hands on the death of the Cardinal of York. This Sir Walter gladly accepted, and contemplated with pleasure spending the ensuing winter in London. But another proposition, that of elevating him to the rank of Privy Councillor, was unhesitatingly declined. He felt that any increase of rank under the circumstances of

diminished fortune and failing health would be idle and unsuitable, and desired his friend, the Lord Chief Commissioner, whom the King had desired to ascertain his feelings on the subject, to convey his grateful thanks, with his humble apology.

He heard of the King's death on what was otherwise a pleasant day. The Diary says — "*June 27* — Yesterday morning I worked as usual at proofs and copy of my infernal Demonology, a task to which my poverty and not my will consents About twelve o'clock, I went to the country to take a day's relaxation We (i.e. Mr Cadell, James Ballantyne, and I) went to Prestonpans, and getting there about one, surveyed the little village, where my aunt and I were lodgers for the sake of sea-bathing, in 1778, I believe I knew the house of Mr Warroch, where we lived, a poor cottage, of which the owners and their family are extinct I recollected my juvenile ideas of dignity attendant on the large gate, a black arch which lets out upon the sea I saw the church where I yawned under the inflictions of a Dr McCormack, a name in which dulness seems to have been hereditary. I saw the links where I arranged my shells upon the turf, and swam my little skiff in the pools Many comparisons between the man and the boy—many recollections of my kind aunt—of old George Constable, who, I think, dangled after her—of Dalgetty, a virtuous half-pay lieutenant, who swaggered his solitary walk on the parade, as he called a little open space before the same port We went to Preston, and took refuge from a thunder-plump in the old tower. I remembered the little garden where I was crammed with gooseberries, and the fear I had of Blind Harry's Spectre of Fawdon showing his headless trunk at one of the windows I remembered also a very good-natured pretty girl (my Mary Duff), whom I laughed and romped with, and loved as children love She was a Miss Dalrymple, daughter of Lord Westhall, a Lord of Session, was afterwards married to Anderson of Winterfield, and her daughter is now the spouse of my colleague, Robert Hamilton So strangely are our cards shuffled I was a mere child, and could feel none of the passion which Byron alleges, yet the recollection of this good-humoured companion of my childhood is like that of a morning dream, nor should I greatly like to dispel it by seeing the original, who must now be sufficiently time-honoured

"Well, we walked over the field of battle, saw the Prince's Park, Cope's Road, marked by slaughter in his disastrous retreat, the thorn-tree which marks the centre of the battle, and all besides that was to be seen or supposed We saw two broadswords, found on the field of battle, one a Highlander's, an Andrew Ferrara, another the dragoon's sword of that day* Lastly, we came to Cockenzie, where Mr Francis Cadell, my publisher's brother, gave us a kind reception I was especially glad to see the mother of the family, a fine old lady, who was civil to my aunt and me, and, I recollect well, used to have us to tea at Cockenzie Curious that I should long afterwards have an opportunity to pay back this attention to her son Robert Once more, what a kind of shuffling of the hand dealt us at our nativity! There was Mrs. F. Cadell and one or two young ladies, and some fine fat children

*The Laird of Cockenzie kindly sent these swords next day to the armoury at Abbotsford

When the term ended in July the affair of Sir Walter's retirement was all but settled; and soon afterwards he was informed that he had ceased to be a Clerk of Session, and should thenceforth have, in lieu of his salary, &c (£1,300), an allowance of £800 per annum. This was accompanied by an intimation from the Home Secretary that the Ministers were quite ready to grant him a pension covering the reduction in his income. Considering himself as the bond-slave of his creditors, he made known to them this proposition, and stated that it would be extremely painful to him to accept of it, and with the delicacy and generosity which throughout characterized their conduct towards him, they, without hesitation, entreated him on no account to do injury to his own feelings in such a matter as this. Few things gave him more pleasure than this handsome communication.

Just after he had taken leave of Edinburgh, as he seems to have thought for ever, he received a communication of another sort, as inopportune as any that ever reached him. His Diary for the 13th July says briefly—"I have a letter from a certain young gentleman, announcing that his sister had so far mistaken the intentions of a lame baronet nigh sixty years old, as to suppose him only prevented by modesty from stating certain wishes and hopes, &c. The party is a woman of rank, so my vanity may be satisfied. But I excused myself, with little picking upon the terms."

During the rest of the summer and autumn his daughter and I were at Chiefswood, and saw him of course daily. Laidlaw, too, had been restored to the cottage at Kaeside, and though Tom Purdie made a dismal blank, old habits went on, and the course of life seemed little altered from what it had used to be. He looked jaded and worn before evening set in, yet very seldom departed from the strict regimen of his doctors, and often brightened up to all his former glee, though passing the bottle, and sipping toast and water. His grandchildren especially saw no change. However languid, his spirits revived at the sight of them, and the greatest pleasure he had was in pacing Douce Davie through the green lanes among his woods, with them clustered about him on pomes and donkeys, while Laidlaw, the ladies, and myself, walked by, and obeyed his directions about pruning and marking trees. After the immediate alarms of the spring, it might have been even agreeable to witness this placid twilight scene, but for our knowledge that nothing could keep him from toiling many hours daily at his desk, and alas! that he was no longer sustained by the daily commendations of his printer. It was obvious, as the season advanced, that the manner in which Ballantyne communicated with him was sinking into his spirits, and Laidlaw foresaw, as well as myself, that some trying crisis of discussion could not be much longer deferred. A nervous twitching about the muscles of the mouth was always more or less discernible from the date of the attack in February; but we could easily tell, by the aggravation of that symptom, when he had received a packet from the Canongate. It was distressing indeed to think that he might, one of these days, sustain a second seizure, and be left still more helpless, yet with the same undiminished appetite for literary labour. And then, if he felt his printer's complaints so keenly, what was to be expected in the case of a plain and undeniable manifesta-

tion of disappointment on the part of the public, and consequently of the bookseller?

All this was for the inner circle. Country neighbours went and came without, I believe, observing almost anything of what grieved the family. Nay, this autumn he was far more troubled with the invasions of strangers than he had ever been since his calamities of 1826. The astonishing success of the new editions was, as usual, doubled or trebled by rumour. The notion that he had already all but cleared off his incumbrances seems to have been widely prevalent, and no doubt his refusal of a pension tended to confirm it. Abbotsford was, for some weeks at least, besieged much as it had used to be in the golden days of 1823 and 1824, and if sometimes his guests brought animation and pleasure with them, even then the result was a legacy of redoubled lassitude. The Diary, among a very few and far separated entries, has this —

"September 5.—In spite of Resolution, I have left my Diary for some weeks, I cannot well tell why. We have had abundance of travelling Counts and Countesses, Yankees, male and female, and a Yankee-Doodle-Dandy into the bargain, a smart young Virginia-man. But we have had friends of our own also, the Miss Ardens, young Mrs Morritt and Anne Morritt, most agreeable visitors. Cadell came out here yesterday with his horn filled with good news. He calculates that in October the debt will be reduced to the sum of £60,000, half of its original amount. This makes me care less about the terms I retire upon. The efforts by which we have advanced thus far are new in literature, and what is gained is secure."

Mr Cadell's great hope, when he offered this visit, had been that the good news of the *magnum* might induce Sir Walter to content himself with working at notes and prefaces for its coming volumes, without straining at more difficult tasks. He found his friend, however, by no means disposed to adopt such views, and suggested very kindly, and ingeniously too, by way of *mezzo-terminè*, that before entering upon any new novel he should draw up a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the most curious articles in his library and museum. Sir Walter grasped at this, and began next morning to dictate to Laidlaw what he designed to publish in the usual novel shape, under the title of *Reliquiæ Trotcosienses*, or the Gabions of Jonathan Oldbuck. Nothing, as it seemed to all about him, could have suited the time better, but after a few days he said he found this was not sufficient—that he should proceed in it during *horæ subcesivæ*, but must bend himself to the composition of a romance, founded on a story which he had more than once told cursorily already, and for which he had been revolving the various titles of Robert of the Isle—Count Robert de L'Isle—and Count Robert of Paris. There was nothing to be said in reply to the decisive announcement of this purpose. The usual agreements were drawn out, and the tale was begun.

But before I come to the results of this experiment, I must relieve the reader by Mr. Adolphus's account of some more agreeable things. The death of George IV occasioned a general election, and the Revolution of France in July, with its rapid imitation in the Netherlands, had been succeeded by such a quickening of hope among the British Liberals, as to render this in general a scene of high excitement and desperate strug-

gling of parties In Teviotdale, however, all was as yet quiescent Mr Adolphus says—

“One day, during my visit of 1830, I accompanied Sir Walter to Jedburgh, when the eldest son of Mr Scott of Harden (now Lord Polwarth) was for the third time elected Member for Roxburghshire There was no contest, an opposition had been talked of, but was adjourned to some future day The meeting in the Court-house, where the election took place, was not a very crowded or stirring scene, but among those present, as electors or spectators, were many gentlemen of the most ancient and honourable names in Roxburghshire and the adjoining counties Sir Walter seconded the nomination It was the first time I had heard him speak in public, and I was a little disappointed His manner was very quiet and natural, but seemed to me too humble, and wanting in animation His air was sagacious and reverend, his posture somewhat stooping, he rested, or rather pressed, the palm of one hand on the head of his stick, and used a very little gesticulation with the other As he went on, his delivery acquired warmth, but it never became glowing His points, however, were very well chosen, and his speech, perhaps, upon the whole, was such as a sensible country gentleman should have made to an assembly of his neighbours upon a subject on which they were all well agreed Certainly the feeling of those present in favour of the candidate required no stimulus

“The new Member was to give a dinner to the electors at three o'clock In the meantime Sir Walter strolled round the ancient abbey It amused me on this and on one or two other occasions, when he was in frequented places, to see the curiosity with which some zealous stranger would hover about his line of walk or ride, to catch a view of him, though a distant one—for it was always done with caution and respect, and he was not disturbed, perhaps not displeased, by it The dinner party was in number, I suppose, eighty or ninety, and the festival passed off with great spirit The croupier, Mr Bailie of Jerviswood, who had nominated the candidate in the morning, proposed, at its proper time, in a few energetic words, the health of Sir Walter Scott All hearts were ‘thirsty for the noble pledge,’ the health was caught up with enthusiasm, and any one who looked round must have seen with pleasure that the popularity of Sir Walter Scott—European, and more than European, as it was—had its most vigorous roots at the threshold of his own home He made a speech in acknowledgment, and this time I was not disappointed It was rich in humour and feeling, and graced by that engaging manner of which he had so peculiar a command One passage I remembered, for its whimsical homeliness, long after the other and perhaps better parts of the speech had passed from my recollection Mr Bailie had spoken of him as a man pre-eminent among those who had done honour and service to Scotland He replied that, in what he had done for Scotland as a writer, he was no more entitled to the merit which had been ascribed to him than the servant who scours the ‘brasses’ to the credit of having made them; that he had perhaps been a good housemaid to Scotland, and given the country a ‘rubbing up,’ and in so doing might have deserved some praise for assiduity, and that was all Afterwards, changing the subject, he spoke very beautifully and warmly of

the re-elected candidate who sat by him, alluded to the hunts which had been thrown out in the morning of a future opposition and *Reform*, and ended with some verses (I believe they were Burns's, *parce delorta*), pressing his hand upon the shoulder of Mr Scott as he uttered the concluding lines,

"But we ha' tried this Border lad,
And we'll try him yet again."

"He sat down under a storm of applauses; and there were many present whose applause even he might excusably take some pride in. His eye, as he reposed himself after this little triumph, glowed with a hearty but chastened exultation on the scene before him, and when I met his look it seemed to say, 'I am glad you should see how these things pass among us'."

"His constitution had in the preceding winter suffered one of those attacks which at last prematurely overthrew it. 'Such a shaking hands with death' (I am told he said) 'was formidable,' but there were few vestiges of it which might not be overlooked by those who were anxious not to see them, and he was more cheerful than I had sometimes found him in former years. On one of our carriage excursions, shortly after the Jedburgh dinner, his spirits actually rose to the pitch of singing, an accomplishment I had never before heard him exhibit except in chorus. We had been to Selkirk and Bowhill, and were returning homewards in one of those days so inspiring in a hill country, when, after heavy rains, the summer bursts forth again in its full splendour. Sir Walter was in his best congenial humour. As we looked up to Carterhaugh, his conversation ran naturally upon Tamlane and Fair Janet, and the ballad recounting their adventures, then it ran upon the *De agrestes*, ghosts and wizards, Border anecdotes and history, the Bar, his own adventures as advocate and as sheriff, and then returning to ballads, it fell upon the old ditty of Tom o' the Linn, or Thomas O'Linn, which is popular alike, I believe, in Scotland and in some parts of England, and of which I as well as he had boyish recollections. As we compared versions he could not forbear, in the gaiety of his heart, giving out two or three of the stanzas in song. I cannot say that I ever heard this famous lyric sung to a very regular melody, but his *set* of it was extraordinary."

"Another little incident in this morning's drive is worth remembering. We crossed several fords, and after the rain they were wide and deep. A little, long, wise-looking, rough terrier, named Spice, which ran after us, had a cough, and as often as we came to a water, Spice, by the special order of her master, was let into the carriage till we had crossed. His tenderness to his brute dependants was a striking point in the general benignity of his character. He seemed to consult not only their bodily welfare, but their feelings, in the human sense. He was a gentleman even to his dogs. His roughest rebuke to little Spice, when she was inclined to play the wag with a sheep, was, 'Ha! fie! fie!' It must be owned that his 'tail' (as his retinue of dogs was called at Abbotsford), though very docile and unobtrusive animals in the house, were sometimes a little wild in their frolics out of doors. One day when I was

* See Burns's ballad of *The Finc Carlins*—an election squib.

walking with Sir Walter and Miss Scott, we passed a cottage, at the door of which sat on one side a child, and on the other a slumbering cat. Nimrod bounded from us in great glee, and the unsuspecting cat had scarcely time to squall before she was demolished. The poor child set up a dismal wail. Miss Scott was naturally much distressed, and Sir Walter a good deal out of countenance. However, he put an end to the subject by saying with an assumed stubbornness, 'Well! the cat is worried,' but his purse was in his hand, Miss Scott was dispatched to the house, and I am very sure it was not his fault if the cat had a poor funeral. In the confusion of the moment I am afraid the culprit went off without even a reprimand.

"Except in this trifling instance (and it could hardly be called an exception), I cannot recollect seeing Sir Walter Scott surprised out of his habitual equanimity. Never, I believe, during the opportunities I had of observing him, did I hear from him an acrimonious tone, or see a shade of ill humour on his features. In a phlegmatic person this serenity might have been less remarkable, but it was surprising in one whose mind was so susceptible, and whose voice and countenance were so full of expression. It was attributable, I think, to a rare combination of qualities: thoroughly cultivated manners, great kindness of disposition, great patience and self-control, an excellent flow of spirits, and lastly, that steadfastness of nerve which, even in the inferior animals, often renders the most powerful and resolute creature the most placid and forbearing. Once, when he was exhibiting some weapons, a gentleman, after differing from him as to the comparative merits of two sword-blades, inadvertently flourished one of them almost into Sir Walter's eye. I looked quickly towards him, but could not see in his face the least sign of shrinking, or the least approach to a frown. No one, however, could for a moment infer from this evenness of manner and temper, that he was a man with whom an intentional liberty could be taken, and I suppose very few persons during his life ever thought of making the experiment. If it happened at any time that some trivial *clourderie* in conversation required at his hand a slight application of the rein, his gentle *explaining* tone was an appeal to good taste which no common wilfulness could have withstood.

"Two or three times at most during my knowledge of him do I recollect hearing him utter a downright oath, and then it was not in passion or upon personal provocation, nor was the anathema levelled at any individual. It was rather a concise expression of sentiment than a malediction. In one instance it was launched at certain improvers of the town of Edinburgh, in another it was bestowed very evenly upon all political parties in France, shortly after the *glorious days* of July, 1830."

As one consequence of the "*glorious days of July, 1830*," the unfortunate Charles X was invited by the English Government to resume his old quarters at Holyrood, and among many other things that about this time vexed and mortified Scott, none gave him more pain than to hear that the popular feeling in Edinburgh had been so much exacerbated against the fallen monarch (especially by an ungenerous article in the great literary organ of the place), that his reception there was likely to be rough and insulting. Sir Walter thought that on such an occasion his

voice might, perhaps, be listened to. He knew his countrymen well in their strength, as well as in their weakness, and put forth this touching appeal to their better feelings, in Ballantyne's newspaper for the 20th of October —

"We are enabled to announce, from authority, that Charles of Bourbon, the ex-King of France, is about to become once more our fellow-citizen, though probably for only a limited space, and is presently about to repair to Edinburgh, in order again to inhabit the apartments which he long ago occupied in Holyrood House. This temporary arrangement, it is said, has been made in compliance with his own request, with which our benevolent Monarch immediately complied, willing to consult, in every respect possible, the feelings of a Prince under the pressure of misfortunes, which are perhaps the more severe, if incurred through bad advice, error, or rashness. The attendants of the late sovereign will be reduced to the least possible number, and consist chiefly of ladies and children, and his style of life will be strictly retired. In these circumstances, it would be unworthy of us as Scotsmen, or as men, if this most unfortunate family should meet a word or look from the meanest individual tending to aggravate feelings, which must be at present so acute as to receive injury from insults, which in other times could be passed with perfect disregard.

"His late opponents in his kingdom have gained the applause of Europe for the generosity with which they have used their victory, and the respect which they have paid to themselves in moderation towards an enemy. It would be a gross contrast to that part of their conduct which has been most generally applauded, were we, who are strangers to the strife, to affect a deeper resentment than those it concerned closely.

"Those who can recollect the former residence of this unhappy Prince in our northern capital, cannot but remember the unobtrusive and quiet manner in which his little Court was then conducted, and now, still further restricted and diminished, he may naturally expect to be received with civility and respect by a nation whose goodwill he has done nothing to forfeit. Whatever may have been his errors towards his own subjects, we cannot but remember, in his adversity, that he did not in his prosperity forget that Edinburgh had extended her hospitality towards him, but, at the period when the fires consumed so much of the city, sent a princely benefaction to the sufferers, with a letter which made it more valuable by stating the feelings towards the city of the then royal donor. We also state, without hazard of contradiction, that his attention to individuals connected with this city was uniformly and handsomely rendered to those entitled to claim them. But he never did or could display a more flattering confidence than when he shows that the recollections of his former asylum here have inclined him a second time to return to the place where he then found refuge.

"If there can be any who retain angry or invidious recollections of late events in France, they ought to remark that the ex-Monarch has, by his abdication, renounced the conflict into which, perhaps, he was engaged by bad advisers, that he can no longer be the object of resentment to the brave, but remains to all the most striking emblem of the mutability of human affairs which our mutable times have afforded. He may say with our own deposed Richard—

“With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
 With mine own hands I give away my crown,
 With mine own tongue deny my sacred state.”*

“He brings among us his ‘grey discrowned head ;’ and in ‘a nation of gentlemen,’ as we were emphatically termed by the very highest authority,† it is impossible, I trust, to find a man mean enough to insult the slightest hair of it.

“It is impossible to omit stating that if angry recollections or keen party feelings should make any person consider the exiled and deposed Monarch as a subject of resentment, no token of such feelings could be exhibited without the greater part of the pain being felt by the helpless females, of whom the Duchess of Angoulême, in particular, has been so long distinguished by her courage and her misfortunes.

“The person who writes these few lines is leaving his native city, never to return as a permanent resident. He has some reason to be proud of distinctions received from his fellow-citizens, and he has not the slightest doubt that the taste and good feeling of those whom he will still term so, will dictate to them the quiet, civil, and respectful tone of feeling, which will do honour both to their heads and their hearts, which have seldom been appealed to in vain.

“The Frenchman Melmet, in mentioning the refuge afforded by Edinburgh to Henry VI in his distress, records it as the most hospitable town in Europe. It is a testimony to be proud of, and sincerely do I hope there is little danger of forfeiting it upon the present occasion.”

The effect of this manly admonition was even more complete than the writer had anticipated. The royal exiles were received with perfect decorum, which their modest bearing to all classes, and unobtrusive though magnificent benevolence to the poor, ere long converted into a feeling of deep and affectionate respectfulness. During their stay in Scotland the King took more than one opportunity of conveying to Sir Walter his gratitude for this salutary interference on his behalf. The ladies of the Royal Family had a curiosity to see Abbotsford, but being aware of his reduced health and wealth, took care to visit the place when he was known to be from home. Several French noblemen of the train, however, paid him their respects personally. I remember with particular pleasure a couple of days that the Duke of Laval-Montmorency spent with him, he was also much gratified with a visit from Marshal Bourmont, though unfortunately that came after his ailments had much advanced. The Marshal was accompanied by the Baron d’Haussez, one of the Polignac Ministry, whose published account of his residence in this country contains no specimen of vain imbecility more pitiable than the page he gives to Abbotsford. So far from comprehending anything of his host’s character or conversation, the Baron had not even eyes to observe that he was in a sorely dilapidated condition of bodily health. The reader will perceive by-and-by that he had had another *fit* only a few days before he received these strangers, and that, moreover, he was

* *King Richard II.* Act IV. Scene 1.

† This was the expression of King George IV, at the close of the first day he spent in Scotland.

engaged at the moment in a most painful correspondence with his printer and bookseller.

I conclude this chapter with a letter to Lady Louisa Stuart, who had, it seems, formed some erroneous guesses about the purport of the forthcoming Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft. That volume had been some weeks out of hand—but, for booksellers' reasons, it was not published until Christmas.

To the Right Hon. Lady Louisa Stuart, care of Lord Montague

"Abbotsford, October 31, 1830

"MY DEAR LADY LOUISA,—

"I come before your ladyship for once in the character of Not Guilty. I am a wronged man, who deny, with Lady Teazle, *the butler and the coach-horse*. Positively, in sending a blow to explode old and worn-out follies, I could not think I was aiding and abetting those of this—at least I had no purpose of doing so. Your ladyship cannot think me such an owl as to pay more respect to animal magnetism, or scullology—I forget its learned name—or any other *ology* of the present day. The sailors have an uncouth proverb that every man must eat a peek of dirt in the course of his life, and thereby reconcile themselves to swallow unpalatable messes. Even so say I, every age must swallow a certain deal of superstitious nonsense, only, observing the variety which Nature seems to study through all her works, each generation takes its nonsense, as heralds say, *with a difference*. I was early behind the scenes, having been in childhood patient of no less a man than the celebrated Dr. Graham, the great quack of that olden day. I had, being, as Sir Hugh Evans says, a fine sprag boy, a shrewd idea that his magnetism was all humbug, but Dr Graham, though he used a different method, was as much admired in his day as any of the French fops. I did once think of turning on the modern mummers, but I did not want to be engaged in so senseless a controversy, which would, nevertheless, have occupied some time and trouble. The inference was pretty plain that the same reasons which explode the machinery of witches and ghosts proper to our ancestors, must be destructive of the supernatural nonsense of our own days.

"Your acquaintance with Shakespeare is intimate, and you remember why and when it is said,

"'He words me, girl, he words me.'"

"Our modern men of the day have done this to the country. They have devised a new phraseology to convert good into evil, and evil into good, and the ass's ears of John Bull are gulled with it as if words alone made crime or virtue. Have they a mind to excuse the tyranny of Buonaparte? why, the Lord love you, he only squeezed into his Government a grain too much of evilization. The fault of Robespierre was too active liberalism—a noble error. Thus the most bloodthirsty anarchy is glossed over by opening the account under a new name. The varnish might be easily scraped off all this trumpery, and I think my

* *Antony and Cleopatra*. Act V Scene 2.

friends the brave Belgcs are like to lead to the conclusion that the old names of murder and fire-raising are still in fashion. But what is worse, the natural connection between the higher and lower classes is broken. The former reside abroad and become gradually, but certainly, strangers to their country's laws, habits, and character. The tenant sees nothing of them but the creditor for rent, following on the heels of the creditor for taxes. Our Ministers dissolve the yeomanry, almost the last tie which held the laird and the tenant together. The best and worthiest are squabbling together like a mutinous crew in a sinking vessel, who make the question, not how they are to get her off the rocks, but by whose fault she came on them. In short—but I will not pursue any further the picture, more frightful than any apparition in my Demonology. Would to God I could believe it ideal! I have confidence still in the Duke of Wellington, but even he has sacrificed to the great deity of humbug, and what shall we say to meaner and more ordinary minds? God avert evil, and, what is next best, in mercy remove those who could only witness without preventing it. Perhaps I am somewhat despondent in all this. But totally retired from the world as I now am, depression is a natural consequence of so calamitous a prospect as politics now present. The only probable course of safety would be a confederacy between the good and the honest, and they are so much divided by petty feuds, that I see little chance of it.

"I will send this under Lord Montagu's frank, for it is no matter how long such a roll of lamentation may be in reaching your ladyship. I do not think it at all likely that I shall be in London next spring, although I suffer Sophia to think so. I remain, in all my bad humour, ever your ladyship's most obedient and faithful humble servant,

"WALTER SCOTT"

Sir Walter had many misgivings in contemplating his final retirement from the situation he had occupied for six and twenty years in the Court of Session. Such a breach in old habits is always a serious experiment, but in his case it was very particularly so, because it involved his losing, during the winter months, when men most need society, the intercourse of almost all that remained to him of dear familiar friends. He had besides a love for the very stones of Edinburgh, and the thought that he was never again to sleep under a roof of his own in his native city cost him many a pang. But he never alludes either in his Diary or in his letters (nor do I remember that he ever did so in conversation) to the circumstance which, far more than all besides, occasioned care and regret in the bosom of his family. However he might cling to the notion that his recent ailments sprung merely from a disordered stomach, they had dismissed that dream, and the heaviest of their thoughts was that he was fixing himself in the country just when his health, perhaps his life, might depend any given hour on the immediate presence of a surgical hand. They reflected that the only medical practitioner resident within three miles of him might, in case of another seizure, come too late, even although the messenger should find him at home, but that his practice extended over a wide range of thinly peopled country, and that at the hour of need he might as probably be half a day's journey off as at Melrose. We would

fun have persuaded him that his library, catalogues, and other papers had fallen into such confusion that he ought to have some clever young student in the house during the winter to arrange them; and had he taken the suggestion in good part, a medical student would of course have been selected. But, whether or not he suspected our real motive, he would listen to no such plan, and his friendly surgeon (Mr James Clarkson) then did the best he could for us by instructing a confidential domestic, privately, in the use of the lancet. This was John Nicolson—a name never to be mentioned by any of Scott's family without respect and gratitude. He had been in the household from his boyhood, and was about this time (poor Dalgleish retiring from weak health) advanced to the chief place in it. Early and continued kindness had made a very deep impression on this fine handsome young man's warm heart, he possessed intelligence, good sense, and a calm temper, and the courage and dexterity which Sir Walter had delighted to see him display in sports and pastimes, proved henceforth of inestimable service to the master, whom he regarded, I verily believe, with the love and reverence of a son. Since I have reached the period at which human beings owe so much to ministrations of this class, I may as well name by the side of Nicolson Miss Scott's maid, Mrs Celia Street, a young person whose unwearied zeal, coupled with a modest tact that stamped her one of Nature's gentlewomen, contributed hardly less to the comfort of Sir Walter and his children during the brief remainder of his life.*

Affliction, as it happened, lay heavy at the time on the kind house of Huntly Burn also. The eldest Miss Ferguson was on her death-bed, and thus, when my wife and I were obliged to move southwards at the beginning of winter, Sir Walter was left almost entirely dependent on his daughter Anne, William Laidlaw, and the worthy domestics whom I have been naming. Mr Laidlaw attended him occasionally as amanuensis when his fingers were chilblained, and often dined as well as breakfasted with him, and Miss Scott well knew that in all circumstances she might lean to Laidlaw with the confidence of a niece or a daughter.

A more difficult and delicate task never devolved upon any man's friend, than he had about this time to encounter. He could not watch Scott from hour to hour—above all, he could not write to his dictation, without gradually, slowly, most reluctantly taking home to his bosom the conviction that the mighty mind, which he had worshipped through more than thirty years of intimacy, had lost something, and was daily losing something more of its energy. The faculties were there, and each of them was every now and then displaying itself in its full vigour, but the sagacious judgment, the brilliant fancy, the unrivalled memory, were all subject to occasional eclipse—

"Along the chords the fingers stry'd,
And an uncertain warbling made"

Ever and anon he paused and looked round him, like one half waking from a dream mocked with shadows. The sad bewilderment of his gaze

* On Sir Walter's death Nicolson passed into the service of Mr Morrill at Rokeby, where he was butler. Mrs Street remained in my house till 1836, when she married Mr Griffiths, a respectable brewer at Walworth.

showed a momentary consciousness that, like Samson in the lap of the Philistine, "his strength was passing from him, and he was becoming weak like unto other men" Then came the strong effort of aroused will—the cloud dispersed as if before an irresistible current of purer air—all was bright and serene as of old And then it closed again in yet deeper darkness

During the early part of this winter the situation of Cadell and Ballantyne was hardly less painful, and still more embarrassing What doubly and trebly perplexed them was that, while the MS sent for press seemed worse every budget, Sir Walter's private letters to them, more especially on points of business, continued as clear in thought, and almost so in expression, as formerly, full of the old shrewdness, and firmness, and manly kindness, and even of the old good-humoured pleasantry About them, except the staggering penmanship, and here and there one word put down obviously for another, there was scarcely anything to indicate decayed vigour It is not surprising that poor Ballantyne, in particular, should have shrunk from the notion that anything was amiss, except the choice of an unfortunate subject, and the indulgence of more than common carelessness and rapidity in composition. He seems to have done so as he would from some horrid suggestion of the Devil, and accordingly obeyed his natural sense of duty by informing Sir Walter, in plain terms, that he considered the opening chapters of *Count Robert* as decidedly inferior to anything that had ever before come from that pen. James appears to have dealt chiefly on the hopelessness of any Byzantine fable, and he might certainly have appealed to a long train of examples for the fatality which seems to hang over every attempt to awaken anything like a lively interest about the persons and manners of the generation in question, the childish forms and bigotries, the weak pomps and drivelling pretensions, the miserable plots and treacheries, the tame worn-out civilisation of the European Chinese The epoch on which Scott had fixed was, however, one that brought these doomed slaves of vanity and superstition into contact with the vigorous barbarism both of western Christendom and the advancing Ottoman Sir Walter had, years before, been struck with its capabilities; and who dares to say that, had he executed the work when he sketched the outline of its plan, he might not have achieved as signal a triumph over all critical prejudices as he had done when he rescued Scottish romance from the mawkish degradation in which Waverley found it?

In himself and his own affairs there was enough to alarm and perplex him and all who watched him, but the aspect of the political horizon also pressed more heavily upon his spirit than it had ever done before. All the evils which he had apprehended from the rupture among the Tory leaders in the beginning of 1827 were now, in his opinion, about to be consummated The high Protestant party, blinded by their resentment of the abolition of the Test Act and the Roman Catholic Disabilities, seemed willing to run any risk for the purpose of driving the Duke of Wellington from the helm The general election, occasioned by the demise of the Crown, was held while the successful revolts in France and Belgium were fresh and uppermost in every mind, and furnished the Liberal candidates with captivating topics, of which they eagerly availed

themselves. The result had considerably strengthened the old opposition in the House of Commons; and a single vote, in which the ultra-Tories joined the Whigs, was considered by the Ministry as so ominous that they immediately retired from office. The succeeding cabinet of Earl Grey included names identified, in Scott's view, with the wildest rage of innovation. Their first step was to announce a bill of Parliamentary Reform on a large scale, for which it was soon known they had secured the warm personal support of King William IV, a circumstance, the probability of which had, as we have seen, been contemplated by Sir Walter during the last illness of the Duke of York. Great discontent prevailed, meanwhile, throughout the labouring classes of many districts, both commercial and rural. Every newspaper teemed with details of riot and incendiarism, and the selection of such an epoch of impatience and turbulence for a legislative experiment of the extremest difficulty and delicacy—one, in fact, infinitely more important than had ever before been agitated within the forms of the Constitution—was perhaps regarded by most grave and retired men with feelings near akin to those of the anxious and melancholy invalid at Abbotsford. To annoy him additionally, he found many eminent persons, who had hitherto avowed politics of his own colour, renouncing all their old tenets, and joining the cry of Reform, which to him sounded Revolution, as keenly as the keenest of those who had been through life considered apostles of Republicanism. And I must also observe that, as, notwithstanding his own steady Toryism, he had never allowed political differences to affect his private feelings towards friends and companions, so it now happened that among the few with whom he had daily intercourse there was hardly one he could look to for sympathy in his present reflections and anticipations. The affectionate Laidlaw had always been a stout Whig, he now hailed the coming changes as the beginning of a political millennium. Ballantyne, influenced probably by his new ghostly counsellors, was by degrees leaning to a similar view of things. Cadell, his bookseller, and now the principal confidant and assistant from week to week in all his plans and speculations, was a cool, inflexible specimen of the national character, and had always, I presume, considered the Tory creed as a piece of weakness, to be pardoned, indeed, in a poet and an antiquary, but at best pitied in men of any other class.

Towards the end of November Sir Walter had another slight touch of apoplexy. He recovered himself without assistance, but again consulted his physicians in Edinburgh, and by their advice adopted a still greater severity of regimen.

The reader will now understand what his frame and condition of health and spirits were at the time when he received from Ballantyne a decided protest against the novel on which he was struggling to fix the shattered energies of his memory and fancy.

To Mr. James Ballantyne, Printer, Edinburgh

"Abbotsford, 8th Dec, 1830

"MY DEAR JAMES,—

"If I were like other authors, as I flatter myself I am not, I should send you an order on my treasurer for a hundred ducats, wishing you

all prosperity and a little more taste,* but having never supposed that any abilities I ever had were of a perpetual texture, I am glad when friends tell me what I might be long in finding out myself. Mr Cadell will show you what I have written to him. My present idea is to go abroad for a few months, if I hold together as long. So ended the Fathers of the Novel—Fielding and Smollett—and it would be no unprofessional finish for yours,

“WALTER SCOTT”

To R. Cadell, Esq, Bookseller, Edinburgh

“Abbotsford, 8th Dec, 1830

“MY DEAR SIR,—

“Although we are come near to a point to which every man knows he must come, yet I acknowledge I thought I might have put it off for two or three years, for it is hard to lose one's power of working when you have perfect leisure for it. I do not view James Ballantyne's criticism, although his kindness may not make him sensible of it, so much as an objection to the particular topic, which is merely fastidious, as to my having failed to please him, an anxious and favourable judge, and certainly a very good one. It would be losing words to say that the names are really no objection, or that they might be in some degree smoothed off by adopting more modern Grecian. This is odd. I have seen when a play or novel would have been damned by introduction of Macgregors or Macgrouthers, or others, which you used to read as a preface to Fair-tosh whisky, on every spirit-shop—yet these have been wrought into heroes. James is, with many other kindly critics, perhaps in the predicament of an honest drunkard when crop-sick the next morning, who does not ascribe the malady to the wine he has drunk, but to having tasted some particular dish at dinner which disagreed with his stomach. The fact is, I have not only written a great deal, but, as Bobadil teaches his companions to fence, I have taught a hundred gentlemen to write nearly as well, if not altogether so, as myself.

“Now, such being my belief, I have lost, it is plain, the power of interesting the country, and ought, in justice to all parties, to retire while I have some credit. But this is an important step, and I will not be obstinate about it, if necessary. I would not act hastily, and still think it right to set up at least half a volume. The subject is essentially an excellent one. If it brings to my friend J. B. certain prejudices not unconnected, perhaps, with his old preceptor Mr. Whale, we may find ways of obviating this, but frankly, I cannot think of flinging aside the half-finished volume as if it were a corked bottle of wine. If there is a decisive resolution for laying aside Count Robert (which I almost wish I had named Anna Comnena), I shall not easily prevail on myself to begin another.

“I may perhaps take a trip to the Continent for a year or two, if I find Othello's occupation gone, or rather Othello's reputation. James seems to have taken his bed upon it—yet has seen Pharsalia. I hope your cold is getting better. I am tempted to say as Hotspur says of his father—

“‘Zounds! how hath he the leisure to be sick!’”

* Archbishop of Grenada in *Gil Blas*.

"There is a very maternal consideration how a failure of Count Robert might affect the *magnum*, which is a main object. So this is all at present from, dear sir, yours very faithfully, "WALTER SCOTT."

To the Same

"Abbotsford, 9th Dec, 1830

"MY DEAR CADELL,—

"I send you sheet B of the unlucky Count—it will do little harm to correct it, whether we ultimately use it or no, for the rest we must do as we *do*, as my mother used to say. I could reduce many expenses in a foreign country, especially equipage and living, which in this country I could not do so well. But it is matter of serious consideration, and we have time before us to think. I write to you rather than Ballantyne, because he is not well, and I look on you as hardened against wind and weather, whereas

"Man but a rush against Othello's breast,
And he retires."

"But we must brave bad weather as well as bear it.

"I send a volume of the interleaved *magnum*. I know not whether you will carry on that scheme or not at present. I am yours sincerely,
"WALTER SCOTT"

"P.S.—I expect Marshal Bourmont and a French Minister, Baron d'Haussez, here to-day, to my no small discomfort, as you may believe, for I would rather be alone."

To the Same.

"Abbotsford, 12th Dec, 1830

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I am much obliged for your kind letter, and have taken a more full review of the whole affair than I was able to do at first. There were many circumstances in the matter which you and J. B. could not be aware of, and which if you were aware of might have influenced your judgment, which had, and yet have, a most powerful effect upon mine. The deaths of both my father and mother have been preceded by a paralytic shock. My father survived it for nearly two years, a melancholy respite, and not to be desired. I was alarmed with Miss Young's morning visit, when, as you know, I lost my speech. The medical people said it was from the stomach, which might be, but while there is a doubt on a point so alarming, you will not wonder that the subject, or, to use Hare's *lingo*, the *shot*, should be a little anxious. I restricted all my creature comforts, which were never excessive, within a single cigar and a small wine-glass of spirits per day. But one night last month, when I had a friend with me, I had a slight vertigo when going to bed, and fell down in my dressing-room, though but for one instant. Upon this I wrote to Dr. Abercromby, and in consequence of his advice I have restricted myself yet further, and have cut off the cigar, and almost half of the mountain-dew. Now, in the midst of all this, I began my work with as much attention as I could, and having taken pains with my story, I find it is not relished, nor indeed tolerated by those who have no interest in condemning it, but a strong interest in putting even a face upon their con-

sciences Was not this, in the circumstances, a damper to an invalid, already afraid that the sharp edge might be taken off his intellect, though he was not himself sensible of that? and did it not seem, of course, that nature was rather calling for repose than for further efforts in a very excitable and feverish style of composition? It would have been the height of injustice and cruelty to impute want of friendship or sympathy to J B's discharge of a doubtful, and I am sensible, a perilous task True

“‘The first bringer of unwelcome news,
Hath but a losing office.’

“and it is a failing in the temper of the most equal-minded men, that we find them liable to be less pleased with the tidings that they have fallen short of their aim than if they had been told they had hit the mark, but I never had the least thought of blaming him, and indeed my confidence in his judgment is the most forcible part of the whole affair It is the consciousness of his sincerity which makes me doubt whether I can proceed with the *County Paris* I am most anxious to do justice to all concerned, and yet, for the soul of me, I cannot see what is likely to turn out for the best I might attempt the *Perilous Castle of Douglas*, but I fear the subject is too much used, and that I might again fail in it Then being idle will never do, for a thousand reasons All this I am thinking of till I am half sick I wish James, who gives such stout advice when he thinks we are wrong, would tell us how to put things right One is tempted to cry, ‘Wo worth thee’ is there no help in thee?’ Perhaps it may be better to take no resolution till we all meet together

“I certainly am quite decided to fulfil all my engagements, and, so far as I can, discharge the part of an honest man, and if anything can be done meantime for the *magnum*, I shall be glad to do it.

“I trust James and you will get afloat next Saturday You will think me like Murray in the farce—‘I eat well, drink well, and sleep well, but that’s all, Tom, that’s all.’ We will wear the thing through one way or other if we were once afloat, but you see all this is a scrape Yours truly,
“W. SCOTT”

This letter, Mr Cadell says, “struck both James B and myself with dismay” They resolved to go out to Abbotsford, but not for a few days, because a general meeting of the creditors was at hand, and there was reason to hope that its results would enable them to appear as the bearers of sundry pieces of good news Meantime, Sir Walter himself rallied considerably, and resolved, by way of testing his powers while the novel hung suspended, to write a fourth epistle of Malachi Malagrowther on the public affairs of the period The announcement of a political dissertation, at such a moment of universal excitement, and from a hand already trembling under the misgivings of a fatal malady, might well have filled Cadell and Ballantyne with new “dismay,” even had they both been prepared to adopt, in the fullest extent, such views of the dangers of our state, and the remedies for them, as their friend was likely to dwell upon They agreed that whatever they could safely do to avert this experiment must be done. Indeed, they were both equally anxious

to find, if it could be found, the means of withdrawing him from all literary labour, save only that of annotating his former novels. But they were not the only persons who had been, and then were, exerting all their art for that same purpose. His kind and skilful physicians, Doctors Abercromby and Ross of Edinburgh, had over and over preached the same doctrine, and assured him that if he persisted in working his brain, nothing could prevent his malady from recurring ere long in redoubled severity. He answered, "As for bidding me not work, Molly might as well put the kettle on the fire, and say, *Now, don't boil*." To myself when I ventured to address him in a similar strain, he replied, "I understand you, and I thank you from my heart, but I must tell you at once how it is with me. I am not sure that I am quite myself in all things, but I am sure that in one point there is no change. I mean that I foresee distinctly that if I were to be idle I should go mad. In comparison to this, death is no risk to shrink from."

The meeting of trustees and creditors took place on the 17th—Mr George Forbes (brother to the late Sir William) in the chair. There was then announced another dividend on the Ballantyne estate of three shillings in the pound—thus reducing the original amount of the debt to about £54,000. It had been not unnaturally apprehended that the convulsed state of politics might have checked the sale of the *magnum opus*, but this does not seem to have been the case to any extent worth notice. The meeting was numerous, and, not contented with a renewed vote of thanks to their debtor, they passed unanimously the following resolution, which was moved by Mr. (now Sir James) Gibson Craig, and seconded by the late Mr Thomas Allan—both, by the way, leading Whigs—"That Sir Walter Scott be requested to accept of his furniture, plate, linens, paintings, library, and curiosities of every description, as the best means the creditors have of expressing their very high sense of his most honourable conduct, and in grateful acknowledgment for the unparalleled and most successful exertions he has made and continues to make for them."

Sir Walter's letter, in answer to the chairman's communication, was as follows—

To George Forbes, Esq., Edinburgh

"Abbotsford, December 18, 1830

"MY DEAR SIR,—

"I was greatly delighted with the contents of your letter, which not only enables me to eat with my own spoons and study my own books but gives me the still higher gratification of knowing that my conduct has been approved by those who were concerned.

"The best thanks which I can return is by continuing my earnest and unceasing attention—which, with a moderate degree of the good fortune which has hitherto attended my efforts, may enable me to bring these affairs to a fortunate conclusion. This will be the best way in which I can show my sense of the kind and gentlemanlike manner in which the meeting have acted.

"To yourself, my dear sir, I can only say, that good news become doubly acceptable when transmitted through a friendly channel, and considering my long and intimate acquaintance with your excellent brother and father, as well as yourself and other members of your family,

your letter must be valuable in reference to the hand from which it comes, as well as to the information which it contains

"I am sensible of your uniform kindness, and the present instance of it Very much, my dear sir, your obliged humble servant,
"WALTER SCOTT"

On the 18th Cadell and Ballantyne proceeded to Abbotsford, and found Sir Walter in a placid state, having evidently been much soothed and gratified with the tidings from Edinburgh His whole appearance was greatly better than they had ventured to anticipate, and deferring literary questions till the morning, he made this gift from his creditors the chief subject of his conversation He said it had taken a heavy load off his mind he apprehended that, even if his future works should produce little money, the profits of the *magnum*, during a limited number of years, with the sum which had been insured on his life, would be sufficient to obliterate the remaining moiety of the Ballantyne debt he considered the library and museum now conveyed to him as worth at the least £10,000, and this would enable him to make some provision for his younger children. He said that he designed to execute his last will without delay, and detailed to his friends all the particulars which the document ultimately embraced He mentioned to them that he had received, through the Lord Chief Commissioner Adam, a message from the new King, intimating His Majesty's disposition to keep in mind his late brother's kind intentions with regard to Charles Scott, and altogether his talk, though grave, and on grave topics, was the reverse of melancholy.

Next morning, in Sir Walter's study, Ballantyne read aloud the political essay—which had (after the old fashion) grown to an extent far beyond what the author contemplated when he began his task To print it in the Weekly Journal, as originally proposed, would now be hardly compatible with the limits of that paper Sir Walter had resolved on a separate publication

I believe no one ever saw this performance but the bookseller, the printer, and William Laidlaw, and I cannot pretend to have gathered any clear notion of its contents, except that the *panacea* was the re-imposition of the income tax, and that after much reasoning in support of this measure, Sir Walter attacked the principle of Parliamentary Reform *in toto* We need hardly suppose that he advanced any objections which would seem new to the students of the debates in both Houses during 1831 and 1832, his logic carried no conviction to the breast of his faithful amanuensis, but Mr Laidlaw assures me, nevertheless, that in his opinion no composition of Sir Walter's happiest day contained anything more admirable than the bursts of indignant and pathetic eloquence which here and there "set off a halting argument."

The critical arbiters, however, concurred in condemning the production Cadell spoke out, he assured Sir Walter, that from not being in the habit of reading the newspapers and periodical works of the day, he had fallen behind the common rate of information on questions of practical policy, that the views he was enforcing had been already expounded by many Tories, and triumphantly answered by organs of the Liberal party, but that, be the intrinsic value and merit of these poli-

tical doctrines what they might, he was quite certain that to put them forth at that season would be a measure of extreme danger for the author's personal interest; that it would throw a cloud over his general popularity, array a hundred active pens against any new work of another class that might even follow, and perhaps even interrupt the hitherto splendid success of the collection on which so much depended. On all these points Ballantyne, though with hesitation and diffidence, professed himself to be of Cadell's opinion. There ensued a scene of a very unpleasant sort, but by-and-by a kind of compromise was agreed to—the plan of a separate pamphlet, with the well-known *nom de guerre* of *Malachi*, was dropped, and Ballantyne was to stretch his columns so as to find room for the lucubration, adopting all possible means to mystify the public as to its parentage. This was the understanding when the conference broke up; but the unfortunate manuscript was soon afterwards committed to the flames. James Ballantyne accompanied the proof-sheet with many minute criticisms on the conduct as well as expressions of the argument: the author's temper gave way, and the commentary shared the fate of the text.

Mr. Cadell opens a very brief account of this affair with expressing his opinion, that "Sir Walter never recovered it," and he ends with an altogether needless apology for his own part in it. He did only what was his duty by his venerated friend, and he did it, I doubt not, as kindly in manner as in spirit. Even if the fourth Epistle of *Malachi* had been more like its precursors than I can well suppose it to have been, nothing could have been more unfortunate for Sir Walter than to come forward at that moment as a prominent antagonist of Reform. Such an appearance might very possibly have had the consequences to which the book-eller pointed in his remonstrance, but at all events it must have involved him in a maze of replies and rejoinders, and I think it too probable that some of the fiery disputants of the periodical press, if not of St. Stephen's Chapel, might have been ingenious enough to connect any real or fancied flaws in his argument with those circumstances in his personal condition which had for some time been darkening his own reflections with dim auguries of the fate of Swift and Marlborough. His reception of Ballantyne's affectionate candour may enlarge what the effect of really hostile criticism would have been. The end was, that seeing how much he stood in need of some comfort, the printer and book-eller concurred in urging him not to despair of *Count Robert*. They assured him that he had attached too much importance to what had formerly been said about the defects of its opening chapters; and he agreed to resume the novel, which neither of them ever expected he would live to finish. "If we did wrong," says Cadell, "we did it for the best, we felt that to have spoken out as fairly on this as we had done on the other subject would have been to make ourselves the bearers of a death-warrant." I hope there are not many men who would have acted otherwise in their painful situation.

On the 20th, after a long interval, Sir Walter once more took up his journal; but the entries are few and short, e.g. —

11 cipher 20, 1830 — Vacation and session are now the same to me. The long remove must then be looked to for the final signal to break up, and this is a serious thought.

"A circumstance of great consequence to my habits and comforts was my being released from the Court of Session. My salary, which was £1,300, was reduced to £800. My friends, before leaving office, were desirous to patch up the deficiency with a pension. I did not see well how they could do this without being charged with obloquy which they shall not be on my account. Besides, though £500 a year is a round sum, yet I would rather be independent than I would have it.

"I had also a kind communication about interfering to have me named a P. Conncillor. But besides that, when one is old and poor, one should avoid taking rank, I would be much happier if I thought any act of kindness was done to help forward Charles; and having said so much, I made my bow, and declared my purpose of remaining satisfied with my knighthood. All this is rather pleasing. Yet much of it looks like winding up my bottom for the rest of my life. But there is a worse symptom of settling accompts of which I have felt some signs. Ever since my fall in February, it is very certain that I have seemed to speak with an impediment. To add to this, I have the constant increase of my lameness—the thigh-joint, knee-joint, and ankle-joint. I move with great pain in the whole limb, and am at every minute, during an hour's walk, reminded of my mortality. I should not care for all this if I were sure of dying handsomely, and Cadell's calculations might be sufficiently firm, though the author of *Waverley* had pulled on his last nightcap. Nay, they might be even more trustworthy, if remains and memoirs, and suchlike, were to give a zest to the posthumous. But the fear is, lest the blow be not sufficient to destroy life, and that I should linger on 'a driveller and a show.'

"*December 24*—This morning died my old acquaintance and good friend, Miss Bell Ferguson, a woman of the most excellent conditions. The last two, or almost three years, were very sickly. A bitter cold day. Anne drove me over to Huntly Burn. I found Colonel Ferguson, and Captain John, R.N., in deep affliction, expecting Sir Adam hourly. I wrote to Walter about the project of my will.

"*December 29*—Attended poor Miss Bell Ferguson's funeral. I sat by the Reverend Mr Thomson. Though ten years younger than him, I found the barrier between him and me much broken down. The difference of ten years is little after sixty has passed. In a cold day I saw poor Bell laid in her cold bed. Life never parted with a less effort.

"*January 1, 1831*—I cannot say the world opens pleasantly for me this new year. There are many things for which I have reason to be thankful, especially that Cadell's plans seem to have succeeded—and he augurs that the next two years will wellnigh clear me. But I feel myself decidedly wrecked in point of health, and am now confirmed. I have had a paralytic touch. I speak and read with embarrassment, and even my handwriting seems to stammer. This general failure

" 'With mortal crisis doth portend,
My days to appropinquate an end.' "

"I am not solicitous about this, only if I were worthy I would pray God

* Hudibras

for a sudden death, and no interregnum between I cease to exercise reason and I cease to exist.

"January 5.—Very indifferent, with more awkward feelings than I can well bear up against. My voice sunk and my head strangely confused. When I begin to form my ideas for conversation, expressions fail me, yet in solitude they are sufficiently arranged. I incline to hold that these ugly symptoms are the work of imagination, but, as Dr. Adam Ferguson, a firm man, if ever there was one in the world, said on such an occasion, *what is worse than imagination?* As Anne was vexed and frightened, I allowed her to send for young Clarkson. Of course he could tell but little save what I knew before.

"January 7.—A fine frosty day, and my spirits lighter. I have a letter of great comfort from Walter, who, in a manly, handsome, and dutiful manner, expresses his desire to possess the library and movables of every kind at Abbotsford, with such a valuation laid upon them as I shall choose to impose. This removes the only delay to making my will."

"January 8.—Spent much time in writing instructions for my last will and testament. Have up two boys for shop-lifting. Remained at Galashiels till four o'clock and returned starved. Could work none, and was idle all evening—try to-morrow. January 9.—Went over to Galashiels, and was busied the whole time till three o'clock about a petty thieving affair, and had before me a pair of gallows-birds, to whom I could say nothing for total want of proof, except, like the sapient Elbow, 'thou shalt continue there, know thou, thou shalt continue.' A little gallows-brood they were, and their fate will catch it. Sleepy, idle, and exhausted on this. Wrought little or none in the evening. January 10.—Wrote a long letter to Henry Scott, who is a fine fellow, and what I call a Heart of Gold. He has sound parts, good sense, and is a true man. Oh that I could see a strong party banded together for the King and country, and if I see I can do any thing, or have a chance of it, I will not fear for the skin-cutting. It is the selfishness of this generation that drives me mad.

"'A hundred pounds?
Ha! thou hast touch'd me nearly.'"

The letter here alluded to contains some striking sentences.

To Henry Francis Scott, Esq, Younger of Harden, M P

"Abbotsford, 10th January, 1831

"MY DEAR HENRY,—

"* * * Unassisted by any intercourse with the existing world, but thinking over the present state of matters with all the attention in my power, I see but one line which can be taken by public men, that is really open, manly, and consistent. In the medical people's phrase, *Præcipuus obsta*: Oppose anything that can in principle innovate on the Constitution, which has placed Great Britain at the head of the world, and will keep her there, unless she chooses to descend of her own accord from that eminence. There may, for aught I know, be with many people reasons for deranging it; but I take it on the broad basis that nothing will be ultimately gained by any one who is not prepared to go full

republican length. To place elections on a more popular foot would produce advantage in no view whatever. Increasing the numbers of the electors would not distinguish them with more judgment for selecting a candidate, nor render them less venal, though it might make their price cheaper. But it would expose them to a worse species of corruption than that of money—the same that has been and is practised more or less in all republics—I mean that the intellects of the people will be liable to be besotted by oratory *ad captandum*, more dangerous than the worst intoxicating liquors. As for the chance of a beneficial alteration in the representatives, we need only point to Preston, and other suchlike places, for examples of the sense, modesty, and merit which would be added to our legislation by a democratic extension of the franchise. To answer these doubts I find one general reply among those not actually calling themselves Whigs—who are now too deeply pledged to acknowledge their own rashness. All others reply by a reference to the *spirit of the people*—intimating a passive though apparently unwilling resignation to the will of the *multitude*. When you bring them to the point, they grant all the dangers you state, and then comes their melancholy *What can we do?* The fact is, these timid men see they are likely to be called on for a pecuniary sacrifice in the way of income tax or otherwise, perhaps for military service in some constitutional fashion, certainly to exert themselves in various ways, and rather than do so they will let the public take a risk. An able young man, not too much afraid of his own voice nor over-modest, but who remembers that any one who can speak intelligibly is always taken current at the price at which he estimates himself, might at this crisis do much by tearing off the liniments with which they are daubing the wounds of the country, and crying peace, peace, when we are steering full sail towards civil war.

"I am old enough to remember well a similar crisis. About 1792, when I was entering life, the admiration of the godlike system of the French Revolution was so rife that only a few old-fashioned Jacobites and the like ventured to hint a preference for the land they lived in, or pretended to doubt that the new principles must be infused into our worn-out constitution. Burke appeared, and all the gibberish about the superior legislation of the French dissolved like an enchanted castle when the destined knight blows his horn before it. The talents, the almost prophetic powers of Burke are not needed on this occasion, for men can now argue from the past. We can point to the old British ensign floating from the British citadel, while the tricolor has been to gather up from the mire and blood—the shambles of a thousand defeats—a prosperous standard to rally under! Still, however, this is a moment of dulness and universal apathy, and I fear that, unless an Orlando should blow the horn, it might fail to awaken the sleepers. But though we cannot do all, we should at least do each of us whatever we can.

"I would fain have a society formed for extending mutual understanding. Place yourselves at the head and call yourselves sons of St Andrew, anything or nothing—but let there be a mutual understanding. Unite and combine. You will be surprised to see how soon you will become fashionable. It was by something of this kind that the stand was made in 1791-2, *vis unita fortior*. I earnestly recommend

to Charles Bailhe, Johnstone of Alva, and yourself, to lose no opportunity to gather together the opinions of your friends, especially of your companions, for it is only among the young, I am sorry to say, that energy and real patriotism are now to be found. If it should be thought fit to admit peers, which will depend on the plans and objects adopted, our Chief ought naturally to be at the head. As for myself, no personal interests shall prevent my doing my best in the cause which I have always conceived to be that of my country. But I suspect there is little of me left to make my services worth the having. Why should not old Scotland have a party among her own children?—Yours very sincerely,
 "WALTER SCOTT"

DIARY. "January 11.—Wrote and sent off about three of my own pages in the morning, then walked with Swanston. I tried to write before dinner, but with drowsiness and pain in my head made little way. A man carries no scales about him to ascertain his own value. I always remember the prayer of Virgil's sailor in extremity.

"Non jam prima peto Mnæstheus nec vincere certo,
 Quamquam O!—Sed superent quibus hoc, Neptune, dedisti!
 Extremos pudeat reducere. hoc vincite, cives,
 Et prohibete nefas!"

"We must to our oar; but I think this and another are all that even success would tempt me to write.

"January 17—I had written two hours, when various visitors began to drop in. I was sick of these interruptions, and dismissed Mr Laidlaw, having no hope of resuming my theme with spirit. God send me more leisure and fewer friends to peck it away by tea-spoonfuls! Another fool sends to entreat an autograph, which he should be ashamed in civility to ask, as I am to deny. I got notice of poor Henry Mackenzie's death. He has long maintained a niche in Scottish literature, gayest of the gay, though most sensitive of the sentimental.

"January 18—Dictated to Laidlaw till about one o'clock, during which time it was rainy. Afterwards I walked, sliding about in the mud, and very uncomfortable. In fact, there is no mistaking the three sufficients,† and fate is now straitening its circumvallations around me.

"Come what come may,
 Time and the hour run through the roughest day"‡

"January 19—Mr Laidlaw came down at ten, and we wrote till one. This is an important help to me, as it saves both my eyesight and nerves, which last are cruelly affected by finding those who look out of the windows grow gradual darker and darker. Rode out, or, more properly, was carried out, into the woods to see the course of a new road, which may serve to carry off the flummings of the trees, and for rides. It is very well lined, and will serve both for beauty and convenience. Mr Laidlaw engages to come back to dinner, and finish two or three more.

* Æneid V.

† Sir W. alludes to Mrs Piozzi's tale of the Three Sufficient Warnings.

‡ Macbeth, Act III Scene 3.

pages. Met my agreeable and ladylike neighbour, Mrs Brewster, on my pony, and I was actually ashamed to be seen by her

“‘Sir Dennis Brand, and on so poor a steed!’”

“I believe detestable folly of this kind is the very last that leaves us. One would have thought I ought to have little vanity at this time o’ day; but it is an abiding appurtenance of the old Adam, and I write for penance what, like a fool, I actually felt. I think the peep, real or imaginary, at the gates of death should have given me firmness not to mind little afflictions.”

On the 31st of January, Miss Scott being too unwell for a journey, Sir Walter went alone to Edinburgh for the purpose of executing his last will. He (for the first time in his native town) took up his quarters at a hotel; but the noise of the street disturbed him during the night (another evidence how much his nervous system had been shattered), and next day he was persuaded to remove to his bookseller’s house in Athol Crescent. In the apartment allotted to him there he found several little pieces of furniture, which some kind person had purchased for him at the sale in Castle Street, and which he presented to Mrs. Cadell. “Here,” says his letter to Mrs. Lockhart, “I saw various things that belonged to poor No 39. I had many sad thoughts on seeing and handling them, but they are in kind keeping, and I am glad they had not gone to strangers.”

There came on next day a storm of such severity that he had to remain under this friendly roof until the 9th of February. His host perceived that he was unfit for any company but the quietest, and had sometimes one old friend, Mr Thomson, Mr Clerk, or Mr Skene to dinner, but no more. He seemed glad to see them, but they all observed him with pain. He never took the lead in conversation, and often remained altogether silent. In the mornings he wrote usually for several hours at Count Robert, and Mr Cadell remembers in particular, that on Ballantyne’s reminding him that a motto was wanted for one of the chapters already finished, he looked out for a moment at the gloomy weather, and penned these lines—

“The storm increases—’tis no sunny shower,
Foster’d in the moist breast of March or April,
Or such as parched summer cools his lips with
Heaven’s windows are flung wide; the inmost deeps
Call in hoarse greeting one upon another;
On comes the flood in all its forming horrors,
And where’s the dyke shall stop it?”

—*The Deluge: a Poem*

On the 4th February the will was signed, and attested by Nicolson, to whom Sir Walter explained the nature of the document, adding, “I deposit it for safety in Mr Cadell’s hands, and I still hope it may be agitated, but stammered out a deep *amen*.” Poor Nicolson was much

Another object of this journey was to consult, on the advice of Dr. Ebenezer Clarkson, a skilful mechanist, by name *Fortune*, about a contrivance for the support of the lame limb, which had of late given him much pain as well as inconvenience. Mr Fortune produced a clever

piece of handiwork, and Sir Walter felt at first great relief from the use of it, insomuch that his spirits rose to quite the old pitch, and his letter to me upon the occasion overflows with merry applications of sundry maxims and verses about *Fortune*. "*Fortes Fortuna adiuvat*," he says, "never more sing I

"Fortune, my Foe, why dost thou frown on me?
And wilt my Fortune never better be?
Wilt thou, I say, for ever breed my pain?
And wilt thou ne'er return my joys again?"*

"No—let my ditty be henceforth—

"Fortune, my Friend, how well thou favourest me!
A kinder Fortune man did never see!
Thou propp'st my thigh, thou ridd'st my knee of pain,
I'll walk, I'll mount—I'll be a man again!"

This expedient was undoubtedly of considerable service; but the use of it was not, after a short interval, so easy as at first. It often needed some little repair too, and then in its absence he felt himself more helpless than before. Even then, however, the name was sure to tempt some ludicrous twisting of words. A little after this time he dictated a reviewal (never published) of a book called Robson's British Herald, and in mentioning it to me, he says, "I have given Landlaw a long spell to-day at the saltires and fesses. No thanks to me, for my machine is awry to be tightened in one bit, and loosened in another. I was telling William Landlaw that I might adopt, with a slight difference, the motto of the noble Tullibardine—'Furth Fortune and file the Fetters'!"†

Of this excursion to Edinburgh the Diary says—"Abbotsford, February 9.—The snow became impassable, and in Edinburgh I remained immovably fixed for ten days, never getting out of doors, save once or twice to dinner, when I went and returned in a sedan-chair. Cadell made a point of my coming to his excellent house, where I had no less excellent an apartment and the most kind treatment, that is, no making a show of me, for which I was in but bad tune. Abercromby and Ross had me bled with cupping-glasses, reduced me confoundedly, and restricted me of all creature comforts. But they did me good, as I am sure they sincerely meant to do, I got rid of a giddy feeling, which I had been plagued with, and have certainly returned much better. I did not neglect my testamentary affairs. I executed my last will, leaving Walter burdened with £1,000 to Sophia, £2,000 to Anne, and the same to Charles. He is to advance them this money if they want it, if not, to pay them interest. All this is his own choice, otherwise I would have sold the books and rattletraps. I have made provisions for clearing my estate by my publications, should it be possible; and should that prove possible, from the time of such clearance being effected, to be a fund available to all my children who shall be alive or leave representatives. My bequests must many of them seem hypothetical.

* I believe this is the only verse of the old song (often alluded to by Shakespeare and his contemporaries) that has as yet been recovered.

† "*Fill the fetters*" in the original. No bad motto for the Duke of Athole's ancestors—great predatory chiefs of the Highland frontier.

"During this unexpected stay in town I dined with the Lord Chief Commissioner, with the Skenes twice, with Lord Medwyn, and was as happy as anxiety about my daughter would permit me. The appearance of the streets was most desolate, the hackney-coaches strolling about like ghosts with four horses, the foot passengers few, except the lowest of the people. I wrote a good deal of Count Robert, yet, I cannot tell why, my pen stammers egregiously, and I write horribly incorrect. I longed to have friend Laidlaw's assistance.

"A heavy and most effective thaw coming on, I got home about five at night, and found the haugh covered with water, dogs, pigs, cows, to say nothing of human beings, all that slept at the offices, in danger of being drowned. They came up to the mansion house about midnight, with such an infernal clamour, that Anne thought we were attacked by Captain Swing and all the Radicals."

After this the Diary offers but a few unimportant entries during several weeks. He continued working at the novel, and when discouraged about it, gave a day to his article on Heraldry, but he never omitted to spend many hours either in writing or in dictating something, and Laidlaw, when he came down a few minutes beyond the appointed time, was sure to be rebuked. At the beginning of March he was anew roused about political affairs, and bestowed four days on drawing up an address against the Reform Bill, which he designed to be adopted by the freeholders of the Forest. They, however, preferred a shorter one from the pen of a plain practical country gentleman (the late Mr Elliott Lockhart of Borthwickbrae), who had often represented them in Parliament, and Sir Walter, it is probable, felt this disappointment more acutely than he has chosen to indicate in his journal.

"February 10—I set to work with Mr Laidlaw, and had after that a capital ride, my pony, little used, was somewhat frisky, but I rode on to Huntly Burn. Began my diet on my new regime, and like it well, especially porridge to supper. It is wonderful how old tastes rise.—Feb 23, 24, 25—These three days I can hardly be said to have varied from my ordinary. Rose at seven, dressed before eight—wrote letters, or did any little business till a quarter-past nine. Then breakfasted. Mr Laidlaw comes from ten till one. Then take the pony and ride—*quantum mutatus*—two or three miles, John Swanston walking by my bridle-rein lest I fall off. Come home about three or four. Then to dinner on a single plain dish and half a tumbler, or, by'r Lady, three-fourths of a tumbler, of whisky and water. Then sit till six o'clock, when enter Mr Laidlaw again, who works commonly till eight. After this, work usually alone till half-past ten, sup on porridge and milk, and so to bed. The work is half done. If any one asks what time I take to think on the composition, I might say, in one point of view, it was seldom five minutes out of my head the whole day—in another light, it was never the serious subject of consideration at all, for it never occupied my thoughts for five minutes together, except when I was dictating.—Feb 27—Being Saturday, no Mr Laidlaw came yesterday evening, nor to-day, being Sunday.—Feb 28—Past ten, and Mr Laidlaw, the model of clerks in other respects, is not come yet. He has never known the value of time, so is not quite accurate in punctuality; but that, I hope, will

come, if I can drill him into it without hurting him. I think I hear him coming. I am like the poor wizard, who is first puzzled how to raise the devil, and then how to employ him. Worked till one, then walked with great difficulty and pain—*March 5*—I have a letter from our member Whytebank, adjuring me to assist the gentlemen of the county with an address against the Reform Bill, which menaces them with being blended with Peebles-shire, and losing, of consequence, one-half of their functions. Sandie Pringle conjures me not to be very nice in choosing my epithets. Torwoodlee comes over and speaks to the same purpose, adding, it will be the greatest service I can do the country, &c. This, in a manner, drives me out of a resolution to keep myself clear of politics, and let them 'fight dog, fight bear.' But I am too easy to be persuaded to bear a hand. The young Duke of Buccleuch comes to visit me also, so I promised to shake my duds, and give them a cast of my calling—fall back, fall edge.

"*March 7, 8, 9, 10*—In these four days I drew up, with much anxiety, an address in reprobation of the Bill, both with respect to Selkirkshire and in its general purport. Mr Laidlaw, though he is on t'other side on the subject, thinks it the best thing I ever wrote, and I myself am happy to find that it cannot be said to smell of the apoplexy. But it was too declamatory, too much like a pamphlet, and went far too generally into opposition, to please the county gentlemen, who are timidly inclined to dwell on their own grievances rather than the public wrongs. Must try to get something for Mr Laidlaw, for I am afraid I am twaddling. I do not think my head is weakened, yet a strange vacillation makes me suspect. Is it not thus that men begin to fail, becoming, as it were, infirm of purpose?

—"That way madness lies, let me shun that.
No more of that'—

"Yet why be a child about it? What must be will be.

"*March 11*—This day we had our meeting at Selkirk. I found Borthwickbrae (late Member) had sent the frame of an address, which was tabled by Mr Andrew Lang. It was the reverse of mine in every respect. It was short, and to the point. It only contained a remonstrance against the incorporation with Selkirkshire, and left it to be inferred that they opposed the Bill in other respects. As I saw that it met the ideas of the meeting (six in number) better by far than mine, I instantly put that in my pocket. But I endeavoured to add to their complaint of a private wrong a general clause, stating their sense of the hazard of passing at once a Bill full of such violent innovations. But though Harden, Alva, and Torwoodlee voted for this measure, it was refused by the rest of the meeting, to my disappointment. I was a fool to stir such a dish of skimmed milk with so honourable an action.* If some of the gentlemen of the press, whose livelihood is lying, were to get hold of this story, what would they make of it? It gives me a right to decline future interference, and let the world wag—*Transeat cum cæteris erroribus*—I only gave way to one jest. A rat-catcher was desirous to come and complete his labours in my house, and I, who thought he only talked and

*-Hotspur in *King Henry IV*, Act II Scene 3

laughed with the servants, recommended him to go to the head-courts and meetings of freeholders, where he would find rats in plenty.

"I will make my opinion public at every place where I shall be called upon or expected to appear, but I will not thrust myself forward again. May the Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this vow!"

Though urged to take up his pen against the ministerial Reform Bill, by several persons of high consequence, who, of course, little knew his real condition of health, he resolutely refused to make any such experiment again. But he was equally resolved to be absent from no meeting at which, as Sheriff or Deputy-Lieutenant, he might naturally be expected to appear in his place, and record his aversion to the Bill. The first of these meetings was one of the freeholders of Roxburgh, held at Jedburgh on the 21st of March, and there, to the distress and alarm of his daughter, he insisted on being present, and proposing one of the Tory resolutions, which he did in a speech of some length, but delivered in a tone so low, and with such hesitation in utterance, that only a few detached passages were intelligible to the bulk of the audience.

"We are told," said he, "on high authority, that France is the model for us,—that we and all the other nations ought to put ourselves to school there, and endeavour to take out our degrees at the *University of Paris**. The French are a very ingenious people, they have often tried to borrow from us, and now we should repay the obligation by borrowing a leaf from them. But I fear there is an incompatibility between the tastes and habits of France and Britain, and that we may succeed as ill in copying them, as they have hitherto done in copying us. We in this district are proud, and with reason, that the first chain-bridge was the work of a Scotchman. It still hangs where he erected it a pretty long time ago. The French heard of our invention, and determined to introduce it, but with great improvements and embellishments. A friend of my own saw the thing tried. It was on the Seine, at Marly. The French chain-bridge looked lighter and airier than the prototype. Every Englishman present was disposed to confess that we had been beat at our own trade. But by-and-bye the gates were opened, and the multitude were to pass over. It began to swing rather formidably beneath the pressure of the good company, and by the time the architect, who led the procession in great pomp and glory, reached the middle, the whole gave way, and he, worthy, patriotic artist, was the first who got a ducking. They had forgot the great middle bolt, or rather, this ingenious person had conceived that to be a clumsy-looking feature, which might safely be dispensed with, while he put some invisible gimcrack of his own to supply its place."—Here Sir Walter was interrupted by violent hissing and hooting from the populace of the town, who had flocked in and occupied the greater part of the Court-House. He stood calmly till the storm subsided, and resumed, but the friend whose notes are before me could not catch what he said, until his voice rose with another illustration of the old style. "My friends," he said, "I am old and failing, and you think me full of very silly prejudices; but I have seen a good deal of public men, and thought a good deal of public affairs in my day,

* See Edinburgh Review for Oct., 1830, p. 23.

and I can't help suspecting that the manufacturers of this new constitution are like a parcel of schoolboys taking to pieces a watch which used to go tolerably well for all practical purposes, in the conceit that they can put it together again far better than the old watchmaker. I fear they will fail when they come to the reconstruction, and I should not, I confess, be much surprised if it were to turn out that their first step had been to break the main-spring." Here he was again stopped by a confused Babel of contemptuous sounds, which seemed likely to render further attempts ineffectual. He, abruptly and unheard, proposed his resolution, and then turning to the riotous artizans, exclaimed, "I regard your gabble no more than the geese on the green." His countenance glowed with indignation as he resumed his seat on the bench. But when, a few moments afterwards, the business being over, he rose to withdraw, every trace of passion was gone. He turned round at the door and bowed to the assembly. Two or three, not more, renewed their hissing, he bowed again, and took leave in the words of the doomed gladiator, which I hope none who had joined in these insults understood—"MORITURUS VOS SALUTO."

CHAPTER XXIX.

APOPLETIC SEIZURE—CASTLE DANGEROUS—VOYAGE TO MALTA—RESIDENCE AT NAPLES—LAST ATTEMPTS AT ROMANCE—ARRIVAL IN LONDON—AT ABBOTSFORD—DEATH AND FUNERAL—CONCLUSION.

THE next entry in the Diary (April, 1831) is as follows —

"From Saturday, 16th April, to Sunday, 24th of the same month, unpleasantly occupied by ill health and its consequences. A distinct stroke of paralysis affecting both my nerves and speech, though beginning only on Monday with a very bad cold. Dr Abercromby was brought out by the friendly care of Cadell, but young Clarkson had already done the needful, that is, had bled and blistered, and placed me on a very reduced diet. Whether precautions have been taken in time I cannot tell. I think they have, though severe in themselves, beat the disease, but I am alike prepared."

The preceding paragraph has been deciphered with difficulty. The blow which it records was greatly more severe than any that had gone before it. Sir Walter's friend Lord Meadowbank had come to Abbotsford as usual when on the Jedburgh circuit, and he would make an effort to receive the Judge in something of the old style of the place, he collected several of the neighbouring gentry to dinner, and tried to bear his wonted part in the conversation. Feeling his strength and spirits flagging, he was tempted to violate his physician's directions, and took two or three glasses of champagne, not having tasted wine for several months before. On retiring to his dressing-room he had this severe shock of apoplectic paralysis, and kept his bed under the surgeon's hands for several days.

Shortly afterwards his eldest son and his daughter Sophia arrived at Abbotsford. It may be supposed that they would both have been near him instantly, had that been possible, but, not to mention the dread of seeming to be alarmed about him, Major Scott's regiment was stationed in a very disturbed district, and his sister was still in a disabled state from the relics of a rheumatic fever. I followed her a week later, when we established ourselves at Chiefswood for the rest of the season. Charles Scott had some months before this time gone to Naples, as an attaché to the British Embassy there. During the next six months the Major was at Abbotsford every now and then—as often as circumstances could permit him to be absent from his Hussars.

DIARY "April 27, 1831.—They have cut me off from animal food and fermented liquors of every kind, and, thank God, I can fast with anyone. I walked out and found the day delightful, the woods too looking charming, just bursting forth to the tune of the birds. I have

been whistling on my wits like so many chickens, and cannot miss any of them I feel, on the whole, better than I have yet done I believe I have fined and recovered, and so may be thankful.—*April 28, 29*—Walter made his appearance here, well and stout, and completely recovered from his stomach complaints by abstinence He has youth on his side, and I in age must submit to be a Lazarus The medical men persist in recommending a seton. I am no friend to these remedies, and will be sure of the necessity before I yield consent The dying like an Indian under tortures is no joke, and as Commodore Trunnion says, I feel heart-whole as a biscuit—*April 30—May 1*—Go on with Count Robert half a dozen leaves per day I am not much behind with my hand-work. The task of pumping my brains becomes inevitably harder when

“ ‘Both chain pumps are choked below,’ ”

“and though this may not be the case literally, yet the apprehension is well-nigh as bad—*May 3*—Sophia arrives, with all the children looking well and beautiful, except poor Johnnie, who looks pale But it is no wonder, poor thing—*May 4*—I had a letter from Lockhart, promising to be down by next Wednesday I shall be glad to see and consult with Lockhart. My pronunciation is a good deal improved My time glides away ill employed, but I am afraid of the palsy I should not like to be pinned to my chair I believe even that kind of life is more endurable than we could suppose—yet the idea is terrible to a man who has been active Your wishes are limited to your little circle My own circle in bodily matters is narrowing daily, not so in intellectual matters—but of that I am perhaps a worse judge The plough is nearing the end of the furrow

“*May 5*—A fleece of letters, which must be answered, I suppose, all from persons my zealous admirers, of course, and expecting a degree of generosity, which will put to rights all their maladies, physical and mental, and that I can make up whatever losses have been their lot, raise them to a desirable rank, and will stand their protector and patron I must, they take it for granted, be astonished at having an address from a stranger, on the contrary, I would be astonished if any of these extravagant epistles came from any one who had the least title to enter into correspondence My son Walter takes leave of me to-day, to return to Sheffield At his entreaty I have agreed to put in a seton, which they seem all to recommend My own opinion is, this addition to my tortures will do me no good—but I cannot hold out against my son.

“*May 6, 7, 8*—Here is a precious job I have a formal remonstrance from these critical people, Ballantyne and Cadell, against the last volume of Count Robert, which is within a sheet of being finished I suspect their opinion will be found to coincide with that of the public, at least it is not very different from my own The blow is a stunning one I suppose, for I scarcely feel it It is singular, but it comes with as little surprise as if I had a remedy ready, yet, God knows, I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky, I think, into the bargain I cannot conceive that I should have tied a knot with my tongue which my teeth cannot untie We shall see I have suffered terribly, that is the truth, rather in body than in mind, and I often wish I could lie down and sleep without waking But I will fight it out if I can. It would argue too great an

attachment of consequence to my literary labours to sink under critical clamour Did I know how to begin, I would begin again this very day, although I knew I should sink at the end After all, this is but fear and faintness of heart, though of another kind from that which trembleth at a loaded pistol My bodily strength is terribly gone, perhaps my mental too"

On my arrival (May 10th), I found Sir Walter to have rallied considerably, yet his appearance as I first saw him was the most painful sight I had ever then seen Knowing at what time I might be expected, he had been lifted on his pony, and advanced about half a mile on the Selkirk road to meet me He moved at a foot-pace, with Laidlaw at one stirrup, and his forester Swanston (a fine fellow, who did all he could to replace Tom Purdie) at the other Abreast was old Peter Mathieson on horseback, with one of my children astride before him on a pillion Sir Walter had had his head shaved, and wore a black silk nightcap under his blue bonnet All his garments hung loose about him, his countenance was thin and haggard, and there was an obvious distortion in the muscles of one cheek His look, however, was placid, his eye as bright as ever, perhaps brighter than it ever was in health, he smiled with the same affectionate gentleness, and though at first it was not easy to understand everything he said, he spoke cheerfully and manfully.

He had resumed, and was trying to recast, his novel All the medical men had urged him, by every argument, to abstain from any such attempts, but he smiled on them in silence, or answered with some jocular rhyme One note has this postscript—a parody on a sweet lyric of Burns's—

"Dour, dour, and eident was he,
Dour and eident but und-ben—
Dour agunst their burley-water,
And eident on the Bramah pen "

He told me that in the winter he had more than once tried writing with his own hand, because he had no longer the same "pith and burr" that formerly rendered dictation easy to him, but that the experiment failed He was now sensible he could do nothing without Laidlaw to hold "the Bramah pen," adding, "Wilhe is a kind clerk, I see by his looks when I am pleasing him, and that pleases me" And, however the cool critic may now estimate Count Robert, no one who saw the author could wonder that Laidlaw's prevalent feeling in writing those pages should have been admiration Under the full consciousness that he had sustained three or four strokes of apoplexy or palsy, or both combined, and tortured by various attendant ailments, cramp, rheumatism in half his joints, daily increasing lameness, and now of late gravel (which was, though last, not least), he retained all the energy of his will, struggled manfully agunst this sea of troubles, and might well have said seriously, as he more than once both said and wrote playfully,

"'Tis not in mortals to command success,
But we'll do more, Sempronius, we'll deserve it " "

* Addison's *Cato*.

To assist them in amusing him in the hours which he spent out of his study, and especially that he might be tempted to make those hours more frequent, his daughters had invited his friend the authoress of *Marriage* to come out to Abbotsford; and her coming was serviceable. For she knew and loved him well, and she had seen enough of affliction akin to his to be well skilled in dealing with it. She could not be an hour in his company without observing what filled his children with more sorrow than all the rest of the case. He would begin a story as gaily as ever, and go on, in spite of the hesitation in his speech, to tell it with highly picturesque effect; but before he reached the point, it would seem as if some internal spring had given way—he paused, and gazed round him with the blank anxiety of look that a blind man has when he has dropped his staff. Unthanking friends sometimes pained him sadly by giving him the catch-word abruptly. I noticed the delicacy of Miss Ferrier on such occasions. Her sight was bad, and she took care not to use her glasses when he was speaking, and she affected to be also troubled with deafness, and would say, “Well, I am getting as dull as a post; I have not heard a word since you said so and so,” being sure to mention a circumstance behind that at which he had really halted. He then took up the thread with his habitual smile of courtesy, as if forgetting his case entirely in the consideration of the lady’s infirmity.

He had also a visit from the learned and pious Dr M. Mackay, then minister of Laggan, but now of Dunoon, the chief author of the Gaelic Dictionary, then recently published under the auspices of the Highland Society; and this gentleman also accommodated himself, with the tact of genuine kindness, to the circumstances of the time.

In the family circle Sir Walter seldom spoke of his illness at all, and when he did it was always in the hopeful strain. In private to Laidlaw and myself his language corresponded exactly with the tone of the Diary. he expressed his belief that the chances of recovery were few—very few—but always added that he considered it his duty to exert what faculties remained to him, for the sake of his creditors, to the very last. “I am very anxious,” he repeatedly said to me, “to be done, one way or other, with this Count Robert, and a little story about the Castle Dangerous, which also I had long had in my head, but after that I will attempt nothing more—at least, not until I have finished all the notes for the novels, &c., for, in case of my going off at the next slap, you would naturally have to take up that job, and where could you get all my old wives’ stories?”

I felt the sincerest pity for Cadell and Ballantyne at this time, and advised him to lay Count Robert aside for a few weeks, at all events, until the general election now going on should be over. He consented, but immediately began another series of Tales on French History, which he never completed. The Diary says—

“*May 12*—Resolved to lay by Robert of Paris, and take it up when I can work. Thinking on it really makes my head swim, and that is not safe. Miss Ferrier comes out to us. This gifted personage, besides having great talents, has conversation the least *exigeante* of any author, female at least, whom I have ever seen among the long list I have encountered with, simple, full of humour, and exceedingly ready

at repartee, and all this without the least affectation of the blue stocking."

On the 18th I witnessed a scene which must dwell painfully upon many memories besides mine. The rumours of brickbat and bludgeon work at the hustings of this month were so prevalent, that Sir Walter's family, and not less zealously the Tory candidate for Roxburghshire himself, tried every means to dissuade him from attending the election for that county. We thought overnight that we had succeeded, and, indeed, as the result of the vote was not at all doubtful, there was not the shadow of a reason for his appearing on this occasion. About seven in the morning, however, when I came downstairs intending to ride over to Jedburgh, I found he had countermanded my horse, ordered the carriage to the door, and was already impatient to be off for the scene of action. We found the town in a most tempestuous state—in fact, it was almost wholly in the hands of a disciplined rabble, chiefly weavers from Hawick, who marched up and down with drums and banners, and, then after filling the Court-hall, lined the streets, grossly insulting every one who did not wear the reforming colours. Sir Walter's carriage, as it advanced towards the house of the Shortreed family, was pelted with stones; one or two fell into it, but none touched him. He breakfasted with the widow and children of his old friend, and then walked to the hall between me and one of the young Shortreeds. He was saluted with groans and blasphemies all the way—and I blush to add that a woman spat upon him from a window, but this last contumely I think he did not observe. The scene within was much what has been described under the date of March 21st, except that though he attempted to speak from the Bench, not a word was audible, such was the frenzy. Young Harden was returned by a great majority, 40 to 19, and we then with difficulty gained the inn where the carriage had been put up. But the aspect of the street was by that time such, that several of the gentlemen on the Whig side came and entreated us not to attempt starting from the front of our inn. One of them, Lieutenant R. Elliot, of the Royal Navy, lived in the town, or rather in a villa adjoining it, to the rear of the Spread Eagle. Sir Walter was at last persuaded to accept this courteous adversary's invitation, and accompanied him through some winding lanes to his residence. Peter Mathieson by-and-bye brought the carriage thither, in the same clandestine method, and we escaped from Jedburgh—with one shower more of stones at the bridge. I believe there would have been a determined onset at that spot, but for the zeal of three or four sturdy Darnickers (Joseph Shillinglaw, carpenter, being their Coryphæus), who had, unobserved by us, clustered themselves beside the footman in the rumble.

The Diary contains this brief notice—"May 18—Went to Jedburgh greatly against the wishes of my daughters. The mob were exceedingly vociferous and brutal, as they usually are nowadays. The population gathered in formidable numbers—a thousand from Hawick also—sad blackguards. The day passed with much clamour and no mischief. Henry Scott was re-elected—for the last time, I suppose. *Troja fuit*. I left the borough in the midst of abuse, and the gentle hunt of *Burk*. Sir Walter. Much obliged to the brave lads of Jeddart."

Sir Walter fully anticipated a scene of similar violence at the Selkirk

election, which occurred a few days afterwards, but though here also, by help of weavers from a distance, there was a sufficiently formidable display of radical power, there occurred hardly anything of what had been apprehended. Here the Sheriff was at home—known intimately to everybody, himself probably knowing almost all of man's estate by head mark, and, in spite of political fanaticism, all but universally beloved as well as feared. The only person who ventured actually to hustle a Tory elector on his way to the poll, attracted Scott's observation at the moment when he was getting out of his carriage, he instantly seized the delinquent with his own hand—the man's spirit quailed, and no one coming to the rescue, he was safely committed to prison until the business of the day was over. Sir Walter had *ex officio* to preside at this election, and therefore his family would probably have made no attempt to dissuade him from attending it, even had he stayed away from Jedburgh. Among the exaggerated rumours of the time was one that Lord William Graham, the Tory candidate for Dumfriesshire, had been actually massacred by the rabble of his county town. He had been grievously maltreated, but escaped murder, though, I believe, narrowly. But I can never forget the high glow which suffused Sir Walter's countenance when he heard the overburdened story, and said calmly, in rather a clear voice, the trace of his calamitous affliction almost disappearing for the moment,—“Well—Lord William died at his post—

“‘Non aliter cineres mando jacere meos’”*

I am well pleased that the ancient capital of the *Forest* did not stain its fair name upon this miserable occasion, and I am sorry for Jedburgh and Hawick. This last town stands almost within sight of Branksome Hall, overhanging also *sweet Teviot's silver tide*. The civilized American or Australian will curse these places, of which he would never have heard but for Scott, as he passes through them in some distant century, when perhaps all that remains of our national glories may be the high literature adopted and extended in new lands planted from our blood.

No doubt these disturbances of the general election had an unfavourable influence on the invalid. When they were over, he grew calmer and more collected, the surgical experiment appeared to be beneficial, his speech became, after a little time, much clearer, and such were the symptoms of energy still about him, that I began to think a restoration not hopeless. Some business called me to London about the middle of June, and when I returned at the end of three weeks, I had the satisfaction to find that he had been gradually amending.

But, alas! the first use he made of this partial renovation had been to expose his brain once more to an imaginative task. He began his *Castle Dangerous*, the groundwork being again an old story which he had told in print, many years before, in a rapid manner. And now, for the first time, he left Ballantyne out of his secret. He thus writes to Cadell on the 3rd July —“I intend to tell this little matter to nobody but Lockhart. Perhaps not even to him, certainly not to J. B., who having turned his back on his old political friends, will no longer have

a claim to be a secretary in such matters, though I shall always be glad to befriend him "

James's criticisms on Count Robert had wounded him. The last visit this old ally ever paid to Abbotsford occurred a week or two after. His newspaper had by this time espoused openly the cause of the Reform Bill, and some unpleasant conversation took place on that subject, which might well be a sore one for both parties, and not least, considering the whole of his personal history, for Mr Ballantyne. Next morning, being Sunday, he disappeared abruptly, without saying farewell, and when Scott understood that he had signified an opinion that the reading of the Church service, with a sermon from South or Barrow, would be a poor substitute for the mystical eloquence of some new idol down the vale, he expressed considerable disgust. They never met again in this world. In truth, Ballantyne's health also was already much broken; and if Scott had been entirely himself, he would not have failed to connect that circumstance in a charitable way with this never strong-minded man's recent abandonment of his own old *terra firma*, both religious and political. But this is a subject on which we have no title to dwell. Sir Walter's misgivings about himself, if I read him aright, now rendered him desirous of external support, but this novel inclination his spirit would fain suppress and disguise even from itself.

When I again saw him on the 13th of this month, he showed me several sheets of the new romance, and told me how he had designed at first to have it printed by somebody else than Ballantyne, but that on reflection he had shrunk from hurting his feelings on so tender a point. I found, however, that he had neither invited nor received any opinion from James as to what he had written, but that he had taken an alarm lest he should fall into some blunder about the scenery fixed on (which he had never seen but once when a schoolboy), and had kept the sheets in proof until I should come back and accompany him in a short excursion to Lanarkshire. He was anxious in particular to see the tombs in the church of St Bride, adjoining the site of his Castle Dangerous, of which Mr Blore had shown him drawings, and he hoped to pick up some of the minute traditions, in which he had always delighted, among the inhabitants of Douglasdale.

We set out early on the 18th, and ascended the Tweed, passing in succession Yair, Ashiestiel, Innerleithing, Traquair, and many more scenes dear to his early life, and celebrated in his writings. The morning was still, but gloomy, and at length we had some thunder. It seemed to excite him vividly, and on coming soon afterwards within view of that remarkable edifice (Drochel Castle) on the moorland ridge between Tweed and Clyde, which was begun, but never finished, by the Regent Morton—a gigantic ruin typical of his ambition—Sir Walter could hardly be restrained from making some effort to reach it. Morton, too, was a Douglas, and that name was at present his charm of charms. We pushed on to Biggar, however, and reaching it towards sunset, were detained there for some time by want of post-horses. It was soon discovered who he was, the population of the little town turned out, and he was evidently gratified with their respectful curiosity. It was the first time I observed him otherwise than annoyed upon such an occasion.

Jedburgh, no doubt, hung on his mind, and he might be pleased to find that political differences did not interfere everywhere with his reception among his countrymen. But I fancy the cause lay deeper.

Another symptom that distressed me during this journey was, that he seemed constantly to be setting tasks to his memory. It was not as of old, when if any one quoted a verse, he, from the fulness of his heart, could not help repeating the context. He was obviously in fear that this prodigious engine had lost, or was losing, its tenacity, and taking every occasion to rub and stretch it. He sometimes failed, and gave it up with *miseria cogitandi* in his eye. At other times he succeeded to admiration, and smiled as he closed his recital. About a mile beyond Biggar, we overtook a parcel of carters, one of whom was maltreating his horse, and Sir Walter called to him from the carriage window in great indignation. The man looked and spoke insolently, and as we drove on, he used some strong expressions about what he would have done had this happened within the bounds of his sheriffship. As he continued moved in an uncommon degree, I said jokingly, that I wondered his porridge diet had left his blood so warm, and quoted Prior's

"Was ever Tartar fierce or cruel
Upon a mess of water gruel?"

He smiled graciously, and extemporized this variation of the next couplet—

"Yet who shall stand the Sheriff's force,
If *Selkirk* carter beats his horse?" *

We spent the night at the inn of Douglas Mill, and at an early hour next morning proceeded to inspect, under the care of one of Lord Douglas's tenants, Mr Haddow, the castle, the strange old *bourg*, the church, long since deserted as a place of worship, and the very extraordinary monuments of the most heroic and powerful family in the annals of Scotland. That works of sculpture equal to any of the fourteenth century in Westminster Abbey (for such they certainly were, though much mutilated by Cromwell's soldiery) should be found in so remote an inland place, attests strikingly the boundless resources of those haughty lords, "whose coronet," as Scott says, "so often counterpoised the crown." The effigy of the best friend of Bruce is among the number, and represents him cross-legged, as having fallen in battle with the Saracen, when on his way to Jerusalem with the heart of his king. The whole people of the barony gathered round the doors, and two persons of extreme old age; one so old that he well remembered *Duke Willie*—that is to say, the Conqueror of Culloden—were introduced to tell all their local legends, while Sir Walter examined by torchlight these silent witnesses of past greatness. It was a strange and a melancholy scene, and its recollection prompted some passages in *Castle Dangerous*, which might almost have been written at the same time with *Lamermoor*. The appearance of the village, too, is most truly transferred to the novel, and I may say the same of the surrounding landscape. We descended into a sort of crypt in which the Douglases

* "But who shall stand his rage and force,
If first he rides, then eats his horse?"

—Alma

were buried until about a century ago, when there was room for no more; the leaden coffins around the wall being piled on each other, until the lower ones had been pressed flat as sheets of pasteboard, while the floor itself was entirely paved with others of comparatively modern date, on which coronets and inscriptions might still be traced. Here the silver case that once held the noble heart of the Good Lord James himself is still pointed out. It is in the form of a heart, which, in memory of his glorious mission and fate, occupies ever since the chief place in the blazon of his posterity —

"The bloody heart blazed in the rim,
Announcing Douglas' dreaded name"

This charnel-house, too, will be recognized easily. Of the redoubted castle itself there remains but a small detached fragment covered with ivy, close to the present mansion, but he hung over it long, or rather sat beside it, drawing outlines on the turf, and arranging in his fancy the sweep of the old precincts. Before the subjacent and surrounding lake and morass were drained, the position must indeed have been the perfect model of solitary strength. The crowd had followed us, and were lingering about to see him once more as he got into his carriage. They attended him to the spot where it was waiting, in perfect silence. It was not like a mob, but a procession. He was again obviously gratified, and saluted them with an earnest yet placid air, as he took his leave. He expresses in his Introduction much thankfulness for the attention of Mr Haddow, and also of Lord Douglas's chamberlain, Mr Finlay, who had joined us at the castle.

It was again a darkish cloudy day, with some occasional mutterings of distant thunder, and perhaps the state of the atmosphere told upon Sir Walter's nerves, but I had never before seen him so sensitive as he was all the morning after this inspection of Douglas. As we drove over the high table-land of Lesmahago, he repeated I know not how many verses from Winton, Barbour, and Blind Harry, with, I believe, almost every stanza of Dunbar's *Elegy on the Deaths of the Makers* (poets). It was now that I saw him, such as he paints himself in one or two passages of his Diary, but such as his companions in the meridian vigour of his life never saw him—"the rushing of a brook or the sighing of the summer breeze bringing the tears into his eyes not unpleasantly." Bodily weakness laid the delicacy of the organization bare, over which he had prided himself in wearing a sort of half stoneal mask. High and exalted feelings, indeed, he had never been able to keep concealed, but he had shrunk from exhibiting to human eye the softer and gentler emotions which now trembled to the surface. He strove against it even now, and presently came back from the Lament of the Makers to his *Douglases*, and chanted, rather than repeated, in a sort of deep and glowing though not distinct recitative, his first favourite among all the ballads,—

"It was about the Lammastide,
When husbandmen do win their hay,
That the doughty Douglas bownde him to ride
To England to drive a prey,"—

down to the closing stanzas, which again left him in tears,—

"My wound is deep—I run would sleep—
 Take thou the vanguard of the thrice,
 And hide me beneath the bracken-bush,
 That grows on yonder lily lee . . .
 This deed was done at the Otterburne,
 About the dawning of the day
 Earl Douglas was buried by the bracken bush,
 And the Percy led captive away "

We reached Milton-Lockhart some time before the dinner-hour, and Sir Walter appeared among the friends who received him there with much of his old graceful composure of courtesy. He walked about a little—was pleased with the progress made in the new house, and especially commended my brother for having given his bridge "ribs like Bothwell." My brother had taken care to have no company at dinner except two or three near neighbours with whom Sir Walter had been familiar through life, and whose entreaties it had been impossible to resist. One of these was the late Mr Elliott Lockhart of Cleghorn and Borthwickbrae—long Member of Parliament for Selkirkshire—the same whose anti-reform address had been preferred to the Sheriff's by the freeholders of that county in the preceding March. But, alas! very soon after that address was accepted, Borthwickbrae (so Scott always called him from his estate in the Forest) had a shock of paralysis as severe as any his old friend had as yet sustained. He, too, had rallied beyond expectation, and his family were more hopeful, perhaps, than the other's dared to be. Sir Walter and he had not met for a few years—not since they rode side by side, as I well remember, on a merry day's sport at Bowhill, and I need not tell any one who knew Borthwickbrae, that a finer or more gallant specimen of the Border gentleman than he was in his prime never cheered a hunting-field. When they now met (*heu quantum mutati*) each saw his own case glassed in the other, and neither of their manly hearts could well contain itself as they embraced. Each exerted himself to the utmost—indeed far too much, and they were both tempted to transgress the laws of their physicians.

At night Scott promised to visit Cleghorn on his way home, but next morning, at breakfast, came a messenger to inform us that Borthwickbrae, on returning to his own house, fell down in another fit, and was now despaired of. Immediately, although he had intended to remain two days, Sir Walter drew my brother aside, and besought him to lend him horses as far as Lanark, for that he must set off with the least possible delay. He would listen to no persuasions. "No, William," he said, "this is a sad warning. I must home to work while it is called day, for the night cometh when no man can work. I put that text, many a year ago, on my dial-stone, but it often preached in vain."*

We started accordingly, and making rather a forced march, reached Abbotsford the same night. During the journey he was more silent than I ever before found him, he seemed to be wrapped in thought, and was but seldom roused to take notice of any object we passed. The little he said was mostly about Castle Dangerous, which he now seemed to

* This dial stone, which used to stand in front of the old cottage, and is now in the centre of the garden, is inscribed, NTE TAP EPXETAI.

feel sure he could finish in a fortnight, though his observation of the locality must needs cost the re-writing of several passages in the chapters already put into type

For two or three weeks he bent himself sedulously to his task, and concluded *Castle Dangerous*, and the long-suspended *Count Robert*. By this time he had submitted to the recommendation of all his medical friends, and agreed to spend the coming winter away from Abbotsford, among new scenes, in a more genial climate, and, above all (so he promised), in complete abstinence from all literary labour. When Captain Basil Hall understood that he had resolved on wintering at Naples (where, as has been mentioned, his son Charles was attached to the British Legation), it occurred to the zealous sailor that on such an occasion as this all thoughts of political difference ought to be dismissed, and he, unknown to Scott, addressed a letter to Sir James Graham, then First Lord of the Admiralty, stating the condition of his friend's health, and his proposed plan, and suggesting that it would be a fit and graceful thing for the King's Government to place a frigate at his disposal for his voyage to the Mediterranean. Sir James replied, honourably for all concerned, that it afforded himself and his Royal Master the sincerest satisfaction to comply with this hint, and that whenever Sir Walter found it convenient to come southwards, a vessel should be prepared for his reception. Nothing could be handsomer than the way in which all this matter was arranged, and Scott, deeply gratified, exclaimed that things were yet in the hands of gentlemen, but that he feared they had been undermining the state of society which required such persons as themselves to be at the head

He had no wish, however, to leave Abbotsford until the approach of winter, and having dismissed his *Tales*, seemed to say to himself that he would enjoy his dear valley for the intervening weeks, draw friends about him, revisit all the familiar scenes in his neighbourhood once more; and if he were never to come back, store himself with the most agreeable recollections in his power, and so conduct himself as to bequeath to us who surrounded him a last stock of gentle impressions. He continued to work a little at his notes and prefaces, the *Reliquiæ* of Oldbuck, and the *Sylva Abbotsfordiensis*, but did not fatigue himself; and when once all plans were settled, and all cares in so far as possible set aside, his health and spirits certainly rallied most wonderfully. He had settled that my wife and I should dine at Abbotsford, and he and Anne at Chiefswood, day about; and this rule was seldom departed from. Both at home and in the cottage he was willing to have a few guests, so they were not strangers. Mr James (the author of *Richelieu*) and his lady, who this season lived at Maxpoffie, and Mr Archdeacon Williams, who was spending his vacation at Melrose, were welcome additions, and frequently so, to his accustomed circle of the Scotts of Harden, the Pringles of Whytbank and Clifton, the Russells of Ashiestiel, the Brewsters, and the Fergusons. Sir Walter observed the prescribed diet, on the whole, pretty accurately, and seemed, when in the midst of his family and friends, always tranquil, sometimes cheerful. On one or two occasions he was even gay, particularly, I think, when the weather was

so fine as to tempt us to dine in the marble hall at Abbotsford, or at an early hour under the trees at Chieftwood, in the old fashion of Rose's *Fête de Village*. I rather think Mr. Adolphus was present at one of these, for the time, mirthful doings, but if so, he has not recorded it in his elegant paper of reminiscences, from which I now take my last extract.

"On the last day which I had the happiness to pass with him among his own hills and streams, he appointed an excursion to Oakwood* and the Linns of Ettrick. Miss Scott, and two other ladies, one of whom had not been in Scotland before, were of the party. He did the honours of the country with as much zeal and gallantry, in spirit at least, as he could have shown twenty years earlier. I recollect that, in setting out, he attempted to plead his hardy habits as an old mail-coach traveller for keeping the least convenient place in the carriage. When we came to the Linns, we walked some way up the stream, and viewed the bold and romantic little torrent from the top of the high bank. He stood contemplating it in an attitude of rest, the day was past when a minute's active exertion would have carried him to the water's brink. Perhaps he was now for the last time literally fulfilling the wish of his own Minstrel, that in the decay of life he might

" 'Still feel the breeze down Ettrick break'

"So much was his great strength reduced, that, as he gazed upon the water, one of his stag-hounds leaping forward to caress him had almost thrown him down; but for such accidents as this he cared very little. We travelled merrily homeward. As we went up some hill, a couple of children hung on the back of the carriage. He suspended his cudgel over them with a grotesque face of awfulness. The brats understood the countenance, and only clung the faster. 'They do not much mind the Sheriff,' said he to us with a serio-comic smile, and affecting to speak low. We came home late, and an order was issued that no one should dress. Though I believe he himself caused the edict to be made, he transgressed it more than any of the party."

I am not sure whether the Royal Academician, Turner, was at Abbotsford at the time of Mr. Adolphus's last visit, but several little excursions, such as the one here described, were made in the company of this great artist, who had come to Scotland for the purpose of making drawings to illustrate the scenery of Sir Walter's poems. On several such occasions I was of the party, and one day deserves to be specially remembered. Sir Walter took Mr. Turner that morning, with his friend Skene and myself, to Smalholm Crags, and it was while lounging about them, while the painter did his sketch, that he told Mr. Skene how the habit of lying on the turf there among the sheep and lambs, when a lame infant, had given his mind a peculiar tenderness for those animals which it had ever since retained. He seemed to enjoy the scene of his childhood, yet there was many a touch of sadness both in his eye and his voice. He then carried us to Dryburgh, but excused himself from attending Mr. Turner into the enclosure. Mr. Skene and I perceived that it would be better for us to leave him alone, and we both accom-

* Oakwood is a ruined castle on the Harden estate in the Vale of Ettrick.

panied Turner. Lastly, we must not omit to call at Bemerside, for of that ancient residence of the most ancient family now subsisting on Tweedside, he was resolved there must be a fit memorial by this graceful hand. The good laird and lady were of course flattered with this fondness of respect, and after walking about a little while among the huge old trees that surround the tower, we ascended to, I think, the third tier of its vaulted apartments, and had luncheon in a stately hall, arched also in stone, but with well-sized windows (as being out of harm's way) duly blazoned with shields and crests, and the time-honoured motto, *BETIDE, BETIDE*, being the first words of a prophetic couplet ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer —

“Betide, betide, whate'er betide,
There shall be Haigs in Bemerside”

Mr Turner's sketch of this picturesque Peel, and its “brotherhood of venerable trees,” is probably familiar to most of my readers.

Mr Cadell brought the artist to Abbotsford, and was also, I think, of this Bemerside party. I must not omit to record how gratefully all Sir Walter's family felt at the time, and still remember, the delicate and watchful tenderness of Mr Cadell's conduct on this occasion. He so managed that the novels just finished should remain in types, but not thrown off until the author should have departed, so as to give opportunity for revising and abridging them. He might well be the bearer of cheering news as to their greater concerns, for the sale of the *magnum* had, in spite of political turbulences and distractions, gone on successfully. But he probably strained a point to make things appear still better than they really were. He certainly spoke so as to satisfy his friend that he need give himself no sort of uneasiness about the pecuniary results of idleness and travel. It was about this time that we observed Sir Walter beginning to entertain the notion that his debts were paid off. By degrees, dwelling on this fancy, he believed in it fully and implicitly. It was a gross delusion, but neither Cadell nor any one else had the heart to disturb it by any formal statement of figures. It contributed greatly more than any circumstance besides to soothe Sir Walter's feelings, when it became at last necessary that he should tear himself from his land and his house, and trees which he had nursed. And with all that was done and forborne, the hour when it came was a most heavy one.

Very near the end there came some unexpected things to cast a sunset brilliancy over Abbotsford. His son, the Major, arrived with tidings that he had obtained leave of absence from his regiment, and should be in readiness to sail with his father. This was a mighty relief to us all, on Miss Scott's account as well as his, for my occupations did not permit me to think of going with him, and there was no other near connexion at hand. But Sir Walter was delighted, indeed, dearly as he loved all his children, he had a pride in the Major that stood quite by itself, and the hearty approbation which looked through his eyes whenever turned on him, sparkled brighter than ever as his own physical strength decayed. Young Walter had on this occasion sent down a horse or two to winter at Abbotsford. One was a remarkably tall and handsome animal,

jet black all over, and when the Major appeared on it one morning, equipped for a little sport with the greyhounds, Sir Walter insisted on being put upon Douce Davie, and conducted as far as the Cauldshiels Loch to see the day's work began. He halted on the high bank to the north of the lake, and I remained to hold his bridle, in case of any frisk on the part of the Couraunter at the "tumult great of dogs and men." We witnessed a very pretty chase or two on the opposite side of the water, but his eye followed always the tall black steed and his rider. The father might well assure Lady Davy that "a handsomer fellow never put foot into stirrup." But when he took a very high wall of loose stones, at which everybody else *cared*, as easily and elegantly as if it had been a pruddle in his stride, the old man's rapture was extreme. "Look at him," said he, "only look at him. Now, isn't he a fine fellow?" This was the last time, I believe, that Sir Walter mounted on horseback.

On the 20th Mrs. Lockhart set out for London to prepare for her father's reception there, and for the outfit of his voyage; and on the following day Mr. Wordsworth and his daughter arrived from Westmoreland to take farewell of him. This was a very fortunate circumstance—nothing could have gratified Sir Walter more, or sustained him better, if he needed any support from without. On the 22nd all his arrangements being completed, and Laidlaw having received a paper of instructions, the last article of which repeats the caution to be "very careful of the dogs," these two great poets, who had through life loved each other well, and, in spite of very different theories as to art, appreciated each other's genius more justly than inferior spirits ever did either of them, spent the morning together in a visit to Newark. Hence the last of the three poems by which Wordsworth has connected his name to all time with the most romantic of Scottish streams. But I need not transcribe a piece so well known as the "Yarrow Revisited."

Sitting that evening in the library, Sir Walter said a good deal about the singularity that Frobding and Smollett had both been driven abroad by declining health, and never returned—which circumstance, though his language was rather cheerful at this time, he had often before alluded to in a darker fashion; and Mr. Wordsworth expressed his regret that neither of those great masters of romance appeared to have been surrounded with any due marks of respect in the close of life. I happened to observe that Cervantes, on his last journey to Madrid, met with an incident which seemed to have given him no common satisfaction. Sir Walter did not remember the passage, and desired me to find it out in the life by Pellicer, which was at hand, and translate it. I did so, and he listened with lively though pensive interest. Our friend Allan, the historical painter, had also come out that day from Edinburgh, and he lately told me that he remembers nothing he ever saw with so much sad pleasure as the attitudes and aspect of Scott and Wordsworth as the story went on. Mr. Wordsworth was at that time, I should notice—though indeed his noble stanzas tell it—in but a feeble state of general health. He was moreover suffering so much from some malady in his eyes that he wore a deep green shade over them. Thus he sat between Sir Walter and his daughter *at all events*—but it was no wonder that Allan thought as much of Milton as of Cervantes. The anecdote of the young student's

raptures on discovering that he had been riding all day with the author of *Don Quixote* is introduced in the preface for Count Robert and Castle Dangerous, which (for I need not return to the subject) came out at the close of November in four volumes, as the Fourth Series of *Tales of my Landlord*

Early on the 23rd of September Sir Walter left Abbotsford, attended by his daughter Anne and myself, and we reached London by easy stages on the 28th, having spent one day at Rokeby. I have nothing to mention of this journey except that, notwithstanding all his infirmities, he would not pass any object to which he had ever attached special interest without getting out of the carriage to revisit it. His anxiety (for example) about the gigantic British or Danish effigy in the churchyard at Penrith, which we had all seen dozens of times before, seemed as great as if not a year had fled since 1797. It may be supposed that his parting with Mr Morritt was a grave one. Finding that he had left the ring he then usually wore behind him at one of the inns on the road, he wrote to his friend to make inquiries after it, as it had been dug out of the ruins of Hermitage Castle, and probably belonged of yore to one of the "Dark Knights of Liddesdale," and if recovered, to keep it until he should come back to reclaim it, but, in the meantime, to wear it for his sake. The ring, which is a broad belt of silver, with an angel holding the heart of Douglas, was found, and is now worn by Mr Morritt.

Sir Walter arrived in London in the midst of the Lords' debates on the second Reform Bill, and the ferocious demonstrations of the populace on its rejection were in part witnessed by him. He saw the houses of several of the chief Tories, and above all, that of the Duke of Wellington, shattered and almost sacked. He heard of violence offered to the persons of some of his own noble friends, and having been invited to attend the christening of the infant heir of Buccleuch, whose godfather the King had proposed to be, on a day appointed by His Majesty he had the pain to understand that the ceremony must be adjourned, because it was not considered safe for His Majesty to visit, for such a purpose, the palace of one of his most amiable as well as illustrious peers.

The following is part of a letter which I lately received from Sir Walter's dear friend and kinsman, Mr Scott of Gala—"The last time I saw Sir W. Scott was in Sussex Place, the day after he arrived from Scotland, on his way to Italy. I was prepared for a change in his appearance, but was not struck with so great a one as I had expected. He evidently had lost strength since I saw him at Abbotsford the previous autumn, but his eye was good. In his articulation, however, there was too manifest an imperfection. We conversed shortly, as may be supposed, on his health. 'Weakness,' he observed, 'was his principal complaint.' I said that I supposed he had been rather too fatigued with his journey to leave the house since his arrival. 'Oh, no,' he replied, 'I felt quite able for a drive to-day, and have just come from the city. I paid a visit to my friend Whittaker to ask him for some book of travels likely to be of use to me on my expedition to the Mediterranean. Here's old Brydone, accordingly, still as good a companion as any he could recommend.' 'A very agreeable one, certainly,' I replied. 'Brydone,' said he, 'was sadly failed during his latter years. Did you ever hear of his remark on his

own works 'Never.' 'Why, his family usually read a little for his amusement of an evening, and on one occasion he was asked if he would like to hear some of his Travels to Sicily. He assented, and seemed to listen with much pleasure for some time, but he was too far gone to continue his attention long, and starting up from a doze, exclaimed, "That's really a very amusing book, and contains many curious anecdotes—I wonder if they are all true." Sir Walter then spoke of as strange a tale as any traveller could imagine, a new volcanic island, viz, which had appeared very lately, and seemed anxious to see it, 'if it would *want* for him,' he said. The offer of a King's ship had gratified him, and he ascribed this very much to the exertions of Basil Hall—"That curious fellow," said he, 'who takes charge of every one's business without neglecting his own, has done a great deal for me in this matter.' I observed that Malta would interest him much. The history of the knights, their library, &c, he immediately entered on keenly. 'I fear I shall not be able to appreciate Italy as it deserves,' continued he, 'as I understand little of painting, and nothing of music.' 'But there are many other subjects of interest,' I replied, 'and to you particularly—Naples, St Elmo, Pæstum, La Montagna, Pompeii—in fact, I am only afraid you may have too much excitement, the bad effects of which I, as an invalid, am too well aware of.' I had before this, from my own experience, ventured several hints on the necessity of caution with regard to over-exertion, but to these he always lent an unwilling ear.

"Sir Walter often digressed during our conversation to the state of the country, about which he seemed to have much anxiety. I said we had no Napoleon to frighten us into good fellowship, and from want of something to do, began fighting with each other. 'Ay,' said he, 'after conquering that Jupiter Scapin, and being at the height of glory, one would think the people might be content to sit down and eat the pudding, but no such thing. When we've paid more of the cash it has cost, they will be more content.' 'I doubt it. They are so flattered and courted by Government that their appetite for power (pampered as it is) won't be easily satisfied now.' When talking of Italy, by the way, I mentioned that at Naples he would probably find a sister of Mat Lewis's, Lady Lushington, wife of the English Consul, a pleasant family, to whom Lewis introduced me when there in 1817 *very kindly*.—"Ah, poor Mat!" said he, 'he never wrote anything so good as the Monk—he had certainly talents, but they would not stand much *creaming*.'

"The Forest and our *new road* (which had cost both so much consultation) were of course touched on. The foundation of one of the new bridges had been laid by him, and *this* should be commemorated by an inscription on it. 'Well,' said he, 'how I should like to have a ride with you along our new road, just opposite Abbotsford—I will hope to be able for it some day.' Most heartily did I join in the wish, and could not help flattering myself it might *yet* be possible. When we parted, he shook hands with me for some time. He did so once more, but added firmly 'Well, we'll have a ride yet, some day.' I pleased myself with the hope that he augured rightly. But on leaving him many misgivings presented themselves, and the accounts from the Continent served but too surely to confirm these apprehensions; never more did I meet with

my illustrious friend There is reason, I believe, to be thankful that it was so, nothing could have been more painful than to witness the wreck of a mind like his "

During his stay, which was till the 23rd of October, Sir Walter called on many of his old friends, but he accepted of no hospitalities except breakfasting once with Sir Robert Inglis, on Clapham Common, and once or twice with Lady Gifford at Roehampton. Usually he worked a little in the morning at notes for the *magnum*, and he drew up, as already mentioned, the preface for the forthcoming tales of Count Robert and Castle Dangerous

Dr Robert Ferguson, one of the family with which Sir Walter had lived all his days in such brother like affection, saw him constantly while he remained in the Regent's Park, and though neither the invalid nor his children could fancy any other medical advice necessary, it was only due to Ferguson that some of his seniors should be called in occasionally with him Sir Henry Hallford (whom Scott revered as the friend of Baillie) and Dr Holland (an esteemed friend of his own) came accordingly; and all the three concurred in recognizing certain evidence that there was incipient disease in the brain There were still, however, such symptoms of remaining vigour, that they flattered themselves, if their patient would submit to a total intermission of all literary labour during some considerable space of time, the malady might yet be arrested When they left him after the first inspection, they withdrew into an adjoining room, and on soon rejoining him found that in the interim he had wheeled his chair into a dark corner, so that he might see their faces without their being able to read his When he was informed of the comparatively favourable views they entertained, he expressed great thankfulness, promised to obey all their directions as to diet and repose most scrupulously, and he did not conceal from them that "he had feared insanity and feared them "

The following are extracts from his Diary — "*London, October 2; 1830* — I have been very ill, and if not quite unable to write, I have been unfit to do it I have wrought, however, at two Waverley things, but not well A total prostration of bodily strength is my chief complaint. I cannot walk half a mile There is, besides, some mental confusion, with the extent of which I am not, perhaps, fully acquainted I am perhaps settling I am myself inclined to think so, and like a day that has been admired as a fine one, the light of it sets down amid mists and storms I neither regret nor fear the approach of death, if it is coming I would compound for a little pain instead of this heartless muddiness of mind The expense of this journey, &c., will be considerable, yet these heavy burdens could be easily borne if I were to be the Walter Scott I once was, but the change is great. And the ruin which I fear involves that of my country Well says Colin Mackenzie —

" "Shall this Desolation strike thy towers alone!
No, fair Ellandonan! such ruin 'twill bring,
That the whirl shall have power to unsettle the throne,
And thy fate shall be link'd with the fate of thy king "

* See ballad of Ellandonan Castle in the Minstrelsy. *Poetical Works*, vol iv p 361.

"We arrived in London after a long journey; the weakness of my limbs palpably increasing, and the medicine prescribed making me weaker every day Lockhart, poor fellow, is as attentive as possible, and I have, thank God, no pain whatever, could the decay but be so easy at last, it would be too happy But I fancy the instances of Euthanasia are not in very serious cases very common. Instances there certainly are among the learned and the unlearned—Dr Black, Tom Purdie. I should like, if it pleased God, to slip off in such a quiet way, but we must take what fate sends I have not warm hopes of being myself again.

"October 12—Lord Mahon, a very amiable as well as clever young man, came to dinner with Mr Croker, Lady Louisa Stuart, and Sir John Malcolm Sir John told us a story about Garrick and his wife The lady admired her husband greatly, but blamed him for a taste for low life, and insisted that he loved better to play Scrub to a low-lived audience than one of his superior characters before an audience of taste On one particular occasion she was at her box in the theatre Richard III was the performance, and Garrick's acting, particularly in the night scene, drew down universal applause After the play was over, Mrs G proposed going home, which Garrick declined, alleging he had some business in the green-room which must detain him In short, the lady was obliged to acquiesce, and wait the beginning of a new entertainment, in which was introduced a farmer giving his neighbours an account of the wonders seen in a visit to London This character was received with such peals of applause that Mrs Garrick began to think it exceeded those which had been so lately lavished on Richard III At last she observed her little spaniel dog was making efforts to get towards the balcony which separated him from the facetious farmer, and then she became aware of the truth 'How strange,' he said, 'that a dog should know his master, and a woman, in the same circumstances, should not recognize her husband'

"October 16—A pleasant breakfast at Roehampton, where I met my good friend Lord Sidmouth On my way back, I called to see the repairs at Lambeth, which are proceeding under the able direction of Blore, who met me there They are in the best Gothic taste, and executed at the expense of a large sum, to be secured by way of mortgage payable in fifty years, each incumbent within the time paying a proportion of about £4,000 a year I was pleased to see this splendour of church architecture returning again

"October 18—Sophia had a small but lively party last night, as indeed she has had every night since we were here—Lady Stafford, Lady Louisa Stuart, Lady Montagu, Miss Montagu, Lady Davy, Mrs M'Leod, and her girls—Lord Montagu, Macleod, Lord Dudley, Rogers, Mackintosh. A good deal of singing"

Sir Walter seemed to enjoy having one or two friends to meet him at dinner, and a few more in the evenings Those named in the last entries came all of them frequently, and so did Lord Melville, the Bishop of Exeter, Lord Ashley, Sir David Wilkie, Mr Thomas Moore, Mr Milman, and Mr Washington Irving At this time the Reform Bill for Scotland was in discussion in the House of Commons Mr Croker

made a very brilliant speech in opposition to it, and was not sorry to have it said, that he owed his inspiration, in no small degree, to having risen from the table at which Scott sat by his side. But the most regular of the evening visitors was, I think, Sir James Mackintosh. He was himself in very feeble health, and whatever might have been the auguries of others, it struck me that there was uppermost with him at every parting the anticipation that they might never meet again. Sir James's kind assiduity was the more welcome, that his appearance banished the politics of the hour, on which his old friend's thoughts were too apt to brood. Their conversation, wherever it might begin, was sure to fasten ere long on Lochaber.

When last in Edinburgh, Scott had given his friend William Burn, architect, directions to prepare at his expense a modest monument, for the grave of Helen Walker, the original of Jeanie Deans, in the churchyard of Invergorey. Mr Burn now informed him that the little pillar was in readiness, and on the 18th October Sir Walter sent him a beautiful inscription for it.

Next morning the Honourable Captain Henry Duncan, R N, who at this time was Storekeeper of the Ordnance, and who had taken a great deal of trouble in arranging matters for the voyage, called on Sir Walter to introduce to him Captain, now Sir Hugh Pigot, the commanding officer of the *Barham*. The Diary says "October 19.—Captain H. Duncan called with Captain Pigot, a smart-looking gentlemanlike man, who announces his purpose of sailing on Monday. I have made my preparations for being on board on Sunday, which is the day appointed."

"Captain Duncan told me jocularly never to take a naval captain's word on shore, and quoted Sir William Scott, who used to say waggishly that there was nothing so accommodating on shore, but when on board, he became a peremptory lion. Henry Duncan has behaved very kindly, and says he only discharges the wishes of his service in making me as easy as possible, which is very handsome—too high a compliment for me. No danger of feud, except about politics, which would be impolitic on my part, and though it bars out one great subject of discussion, it leaves enough besides. Walter arrives ready to sail. So what little remains must be done without loss of time."

"I leave this country uncertain if it has got a total pardon or only a reprieve. I won't think of it, as I can do no good. It seems to be in one of those crises by which Providence reduces nations to their original elements. If I had my health, I should take no worldly fee not to be in the bustle, but I am as weak as water, and I shall be glad when I have put the Mediterranean between the island and me."

"October 23.—Misty morning—looks like a yellow fog, which is the curse of London. I would hardly take my share of it for a share of its wealth and its curiosity—a vile double-distilled fog, of the most intolerable kind. Children scarce stirring yet, but Baby and Macao beginning their Macao notes."

Dr Ferguson found Sir Walter with this page of his Diary before him, when he called to pay his farewell visit. "As he was still working at his MSS," says the Doctor, "I offered to retire, but was not permitted."

On my saying I had come to take leave of him before he quitted England, he exclaimed, with much excitement, 'England is no longer a place for an honest man. I shall not live to find it so, you may' He then broke out into the details of a very favourite superstition of his, that the middle of every century had always been marked by some great convulsion or calamity in this island. Already the state of politics preyed much on his mind—and indeed that continued to form a part of the delirious dreams of his last illness. On the whole, the alterations which had taken place in his mind and person since I had seen him, three years before, were very apparent. The expression of the countenance and the play of features were changed by slight palsy of one cheek. His utterance was so thick and indistinct as to make it very difficult for any but those accustomed to hear it to gather his meaning. His gait was less firm and assured than ever, but his power of self-command, his social tact, and his benevolent courtesy, the habits of a life, remained untouched by a malady which had obscured the higher powers of his intellect."

After breakfast, Sir Walter, accompanied by his son and both his daughters, set off for Portsmouth, and Captain Basil Hall had the kindness to precede them by an early coach, and prepare every thing for their reception at the hotel. They expected that the embarkation would take place next day, and the Captain had considered that his professional tact and experience might be serviceable, which they were eminently. In changing horses at Guildford, Sir Walter got out of his carriage, and very narrowly escaped being run over by a stage-coach. Of all "the habits of a life," none clung longer to him than his extreme repugnance to being helped in anything. It was late before he came to lean, as a matter of course, when walking, upon any one but Tom Purdie, and the reader will see, in the sequel, that this proud feeling, coupled with increasing tendency to abstraction of mind, often exposed him to imminent hazard.

The *Barham* could not sail for a week. During this interval, Sir Walter scarcely stirred from his hotel, being unwilling to display his infirmities to the crowd of gazers who besieged him whenever he appeared. He received, however, deputations of the literary and scientific societies of the town, and all other visitors, with his usual ease and courtesy, and he might well be gratified with the extraordinary marks of deference paid him by the official persons who could in any way contribute to his ease and comfort. The First Lord of the Admiralty, Sir James Graham, and the Secretary, Sir John Barrow, both appeared in person, to ascertain that nothing had been neglected for his accommodation on board the frigate. The Admiral, Sir Thomas Foley, placed his barge at his disposal, the Governor, Sir Colin Campbell, and all the chief officers, naval and military, seemed to compete with each other in attention to him and his companions. In Captain Hall's *Third Series of Fragments of Voyages and Travels* (vol. iii. p. 280) some interesting details have long since been made public. But it may be sufficient to say here, that had Captain Pigot and his gallant shipmates been appointed to convey a Prince of the Blood and his suite, more generous, anxious, and delicate exertions could not have been made, either in altering the interior of the vessel so as to meet the wants of the pas-

sengers, or afterwards, throughout the voyage, in rendering it easy, comfortable, and, as far as might be interesting and amusing

I subjoin an extract or two from the Diary at Portsmouth, which show how justly Dr Ferguson has been describing Sir Walter as in complete-possession of all the qualities that endeared him to society —

“October 24 —The girls break loose—mad with the craze of seeing sights—and run the risk of deranging the naval officers, who offer their services with their natural gallantry I wish they would be moderate in their demands on people’s complaisance They little know how inconvenient are such seizures A sailor in particular is a bad refuser, and before he can turn three times round, he is bound by a triple knot to all sorts of nonsense

“October 27 —The girls, I regret to see, have got a senseless custom of talking politics in all weathers and in all sorts of company This can do no good, and may give much offence Silence can offend no one, and there are pleasant or less irritating subjects to talk of I gave them both a hint of this, and bid them remember they were among ordinary strangers How little young people reflect what they may win or lose by a smart reflection imprudently fired off at a venture !”

On the morning of the 29th the wind changed, and the *Barham* got under weigh

After a few days, when they had passed the Bay of Biscay, Sir Walter ceased to be annoyed with sea-sickness, and sat most of his time on deck, enjoying apparently the air, the scenery, and, above all, the ship itself, the beautiful discipline practised in all things, and the martial exercises of the men In Captain Pigot, Lieutenant Walker, the physician Dr Liddell, and, I believe, in many others of the officers, he had highly intelligent as well as polished companions The course was often altered for the express purpose of giving him a glimpse of some famous place, and it was only the temptation of a singularly propitious breeze that prevented a halt at Algiers

On the 20th November they came upon that remarkable phenomenon, the sudden creation of a submarine volcano, which bore, during its very brief date, the name of Graham’s Island Four months had elapsed since it “arose from out of the azure main,” and in a few days more it disappeared “Already,” as Dr Davy says, “its crumbling masses were falling to pieces from the pressure of the hand or foot.”* Yet nothing could prevent Sir Walter from landing on it, and in a letter of the following week he thus describes his adventure, the *Barham* had reached Malta on the 22nd

To James Skene, Esq, of Rubislaw, Edinburgh

“Malta, Nov 25, 1831.

“MY DEAR SKENE,—

“Our habits of non-correspondence are so firmly established, that it must be a matter of some importance that sets either of us a-writing

* Philosophical Transactions, May, 1834, p 552

to the other. As it has been my lot to see the new volcano, called Graham's Island, either employed in establishing itself, or more likely in decomposing itself—and as it must be an object of much curiosity to many of our brethren of the Royal Society, I have taken it into my head that even the very imperfect account which I can give of a matter of this extraordinary kind may be in some degree valued. Not being able to borrow your fingers, those of the captain's clerk have been put in requisition for the enclosed sketch, and the notes adjoined are as accurate as can be expected from a hurried visit. You have a view of the island, very much as it shows at present, but nothing is more certain than that it is on the eve of a very important change, though in what respect is doubtful. I saw a portion of about five or six feet in height give way under the feet of one of our companions on the very ridge of the southern corner, and become completely annihilated, giving us some anxiety for the fate of our friend, till the dust and confusion of the dispersed pinnacle had subsided. You know my old talents for horsemanship. Finding the earth, or what seemed a substitute for it, sink at every step up to the knee, so as to make walking for an infirm and heavy man nearly impossible, I mounted the shoulders of an able and willing seaman, and by dint of his exertions rode nearly to the top of the island. I would have given a great deal for you, my friend, the frequent and willing supplier of my defects, but on this journey, though undertaken late in life, I have found, from the benevolence of my companions, that when one man's strength was insufficient to supply my deficiencies, I had the willing aid of twenty if it could be useful. I have sent you one of the largest blocks of lava which I could find on the islet, though small pieces are innumerable. We found two dolphins, killed apparently by the hot temperature, and the body of a robin redbreast, which seemingly had come off from the nearest land, and starved to death on the islet, where it had neither found food nor water. Such had been the fate of the first attempt to stock the island with fish and fowl. On the south side the volcanic principle was still apparently active. The perpetual bubbling up from the bottom produces a quantity of steam, which rises all around the base of the island, and surrounds it as with a cloak when seen from a distance. Most of these appearances struck the other gentlemen, I believe, as well as myself; but a gentleman who has visited the rock repeatedly, is of opinion that it is certainly increasing in magnitude. Its decrease in height may be consistent with the increase of its more level parts, and even its general appearance above water, for the ruins which crumble down from the top are like to remain at the bottom of the ridge of the rock, add to the general size of the islet, and tend to give the ground firmness.

"The gales of this new-born island are any thing but odouriferous. Brimstone, and suchlike, are the prevailing savours, to a degree almost suffocating. Every hole dug in the sand is filled with boiling water, or what was nearly such. I cannot help thinking that the great ebullition in the bay is the remains of the original crater, now almost filled up, yet still showing that some extraordinary operations are going on in the subterranean regions.

"If you think, my dear Skene, that any of these trifling particulars

concerning this islet can interest our friends, you are free to communicate them either to the Society or to the Club, as you judge most proper. I have just seen James * in full health, but he vanished like a guilty thing, when, forgetting that I was a contraband commodity, I went to shake him by the hand, which would have cost him ten days' imprisonment, I being at present in quarantine.

"We saw an instance of the strictness with which this law is observed. In entering the harbour, a seaman was pushed from our yard-arm. He swam strongly, notwithstanding the fall, but the Maltese boats, of whom there were several, tacked from him, to avoid picking him up, and an English boat, which did take the poor man in, was condemned to ten days' imprisonment, to reward the benevolence of the action. It is in the capacity of quarantine prisoners that we now inhabit the decayed chambers of a magnificent old Spanish palace, which resembles the pantaloon of the Don in his youth, a world too wide for his shrunk shanks. But you know Malta, where there is more magnificence than comfort, though we have met already many friends and much kindness.

"My best compliments to Mrs Skene, to whom I am bringing a fairy cup made out of a nautilus-shell—the only one which I found entire on Graham's Island, the original owner had suffered shipwreck. I beg to be respectfully remembered to all friends of the Club. Yours ever, with love to your fireside,

"WALTER SCOTT."

At Malta Sir Walter found several friends of former days, besides young Skene. Mr John Hookham Frere had been resident there for several years, the captive of the enchanting climate and the romantic monuments of the old chivalry. Sir John Stoddart, the Chief Judge of the island, had known the poet ever since the early days of Lasswade and Glenfinlas, and the Lieutenant-Governor, Colonel Seymour Bathurst, had often met him under the roof of his father, the late Earl Bathurst. Mrs Bathurst's distinguished uncle, Sir William Alexander, some time Lord Chief-Baron of England, happened also to be then visiting her. Captain Dawson, husband to Lord Kinnedder's eldest daughter, was of the garrison, and Sir Walter felt as if he were about to meet a daughter of his own in the Euphemia Erskine who had so often sat upon his knee. She immediately joined him, and insisted on being allowed to partake his quarantine. Lastly, Dr John Davy, the brother of his illustrious friend, was at the head of the medical staff, and this gentleman's presence was welcome indeed to the Major and Miss Scott, as well as to their father, for he had already begun to be more negligent as to his diet, and they dreaded his removal from the skilful watch of Dr Liddell. Various letters, and Sir Walter's Diary (though hardly legible), show that he inspected with curiosity the knightly antiquities of La Valetta, the church and monuments of St John, the deserted palaces and libraries of the heroic brotherhood, and the reader will find that, when he imprudently resumed the pen of romance, the subject he selected was from their annals. He enjoyed also the society of the accomplished persons I

* James Henry Skene, Esq, a son of Sir W's correspondent, was then a young officer on duty at Malta.

have been naming, and the marks of honour lavished on him by the inhabitants, both native and English

Here he saw much of a Scotch lady, with many of whose friends and connexions he had been intimate—Mrs John Davy, the daughter of a brother advocate, the late Mr Archibald Fletcher, whose residence in Edinburgh used to be in North Castle Street, within a few doors of “poor 39” This lady has been so good as to entrust me with a few pages of her “Family Journal,” and I am sure the reader will value a copy of them more than anything else I could produce with respect to Sir Walter’s brief residence at Malta —

“Before the end of November,” says Mrs Davy, “a great sensation was produced in Malta, as well it might, by the arrival of Sir Walter Scott. He came here in the *Barham*, a frigate considered the very beauty of the fleet, ‘a perfect ship,’ as Sir Pulteney Malcolm used to say, and in the highest discipline. In her annals it may now be told that she carried the most gifted, certainly the most popular author of Europe into the Mediterranean, but it was amusing to see that the officers of the ship thought the great minstrel and romancer must gain more addition to his fame from having been a passenger on board the *Barham*, than they or she could possibly receive even from having taken on board such a guest. Our Governor, Sir F. Ponsonby, had not returned from a visit to England when this arrival took place, but orders had been received that all manner of attention should be paid, that a house, carriage, horses, &c, should be placed at Sir Walter’s disposal, and all who thought they had the smallest right to come forward on the occasion, or even a decent pretence for doing so, were eager to do him honour according to their notions and means

“On account of cholera then prevailing in England, a quarantine was at this time enforced here on all who came from thence, but instead of driving Sir Walter to the ordinary lazaretto, some good apartments were prepared at Fort Manuel for him and his family to occupy for the appointed time, I believe nine days. He there held a daily *levée* to receive the numerous visitors who waited on him, and I well remember, on accompanying Colonel and Mrs Bathurst and Sir William Alexander to pay their first visit, how the sombre landing-place of the Marsa Muscet (the quarantine harbour), under the heavy bastion that shelters it on the Valetta side, gave even then tokens of an illustrious arrival, in the unusual number of boats and bustle of parties setting forth to or returning from Fort Manuel, on the great business of the day. But even in the case of one whom all ‘delighted to honour,’ a quarantine visit is a notably uncomfortable thing, and when our little procession had marched up several broad flights of steps, and we found ourselves on a landing-place having a wide doorway opposite to us, in which sat Sir Walter, his daughter, Major Scott, and Mrs Dawson standing behind, and a stout bar placed across some feet in front of them, to keep us at the legal distance, I could not but repent having gone to take part in a ceremony so formal and wearisome to all concerned. Sir Walter rose, but seemed to do it with difficulty, and the paralytic fixed look of his face was most distressing. We all walked up to the bar, but there stood very like culprits, and no one seemed to know who was to speak first. Sir W.

Alexander, however, accustomed of old to discourse from the bar, or charge from the bench, was beyond question the proper person—so, after a very little hesitation, he began, and made a neat speech expressing our hopes that Sir Walter would sojourn at Malta as long as possible. Sir Walter replied very simply and courteously in his natural manner, but his articulation was manifestly affected, though not, I think, quite so much as his expression of face. He wore trousers of the Lowland small-checked plaid, and sitting with his hands crossed over the top of a shepherd's-looking staff, he was very like the picture printed by Leslie, and engraved for one of the annuals; but when he spoke the varied expression, that used quite to redeem all heaviness of features, was no longer to be seen. Our visit was short, and we left Mr Frere with him at the bar on our departure. He came daily to see his friend, and passed more of his quarantine-time with him than any one else. We were told that between Mr Frere's habitual absence of mind, and Sir Walter's natural Scotch desire to shake hands with him at every meeting, it required all the vigilance of the attendant geni of the place to prevent Mr F from being put into quarantine along with him.

Sir Walter did not accept the house provided for him by the Governor's order, nor any of the various private houses which, to Miss Scott's great amusement, were urgently proffered for his use by their owners, but established himself during his stay at Beverley's Hotel, in Strada Ponente. Our house was immediately opposite to this one, divided by a very narrow street; and I well remember, when watching his arrival on the day he took Pratique hearing the sound of his voice as he chatted sociably to Mr Greig (the Inspector of Quarantine), on whose arm he leaned while walking from the carriage to the door of his hotel—it seemed to me that I had hardly heard so home-like a sound in this strange land or one that so took me back to Edinburgh and our own North Castle Street, where, in passing him as he walked up or down with a friend, I had heard it before so often. Nobody was at hand at the moment for me to show him to but an English maid, who, not having my Scotch interest in the matter, only said, when I tried to enlighten her as to the event of his arrival 'Poor old gentleman, how ill he looks.' It showed how sadly a little while must have changed him, for when I had seen him last in Edinburgh, perhaps five or six years before, no one would have thought of calling him 'an old gentleman.' At one or two dinner parties at which we saw him within the week of his arrival, he did not seem at all animated in conversation, and retired soon; for he seemed resolutely prudent as to keeping early hours; though he was unfortunately careless as to what he ate or drank, especially the latter, and, I fear, obstinate when his daughter attempted to regulate his diet.

A few days after his arrival in Malta he accepted an invitation from the garrison to a *ball*—an odd kind of honour to bestow on a man of letters suffering from paralytic illness but extremely characteristic of the taste of this place. It was, I believe, well got up, under the direction of the usual master of Malta ceremonies, Mr Walker, an officer of artillery, and everything was done that the said officer and his colleagues could do to give it a sentimental if not a literary cast. The decorations were laboriously appropriate. Sir Walter entered (having been received at

the door by a deputation of the dignitaries of the island) to the sound of Scotch music, and as it was held in the great room of the Auberge de Provence, formerly one of the festal halls of the Knights of Malta, it was not a bad scene—if such a gaiety was to be inflicted at all

“A day or two after, we gladly accepted an invitation brought to us by Mrs Scott, to dine quietly with him and two or three officers of the Barham at his hotel, and I thought the day of this dining so *white* a one as to mark it especially in a little note-book the same evening I see it stands dated December 4th, and the little book says, ‘Dined and spent the evening of this day with Sir Walter Scott We had only met him before at large dinner parties At home he was very much more happy, and more inclined to talk Even now his conversation has many characteristics of his writings There is the same rich felicitous quotation from favourite writers, the same happy introduction of old traditional stories, Scotch ones especially, in a manner as easy, and evidently quite unprepared The coming in of a young midshipman, cousin of his (Scott by name), to join the party, gave occasion to his telling the story of ‘Muckle Mouthed Meg,’ and to his describing the tragicomical picture drawn from that story by Mr C K Sharpe, which I remembered to have seen at Abbotsford At dinner he spoke a good deal of Tom Sheridan, after telling a *bon mot* of his in illustration of something that was said, and seemed amused at a saying of Mr Smyth (of Cambridge), respecting that witty and volatile pupil of his, ‘that it was impossible to put knowledge into him, try it as you might’ ‘Just,’ said Sir Walter, ‘like a trunk that you are trying to overpack, but it won’t do, the things start out in your face’ On joining us in the drawing-room after dinner Sir Walter was very animated, spoke much of Mr Frere, and of his remarkable success, when quite a boy, in the translation of a Saxon ballad This led him to ballads in general, and he gravely lamented his friend Mr Frere’s heresy in not esteeming highly enough that of ‘Hardknute.’ He admitted that it was not a veritable old ballad, but ‘just old enough,’ and a noble imitation of the best style In speaking of Mr Frere’s translations, he repeated a pretty long passage from his version of one of the romances of the Cid (published in the appendix to Southey’s quarto), and seemed to enjoy a spirited charge of the knights therein described as much as he could have done in his best days, placing his walking-stick in rest like a lance, to ‘suit the action to the word’ Miss Scott says ‘he has not seen him so animated, so like himself, since he came to Malta, as on this evening

“*Sunday Morning, December 5* (as my said little note-book proceeds to record), Sir Walter spent chiefly in St John’s Church, the beautiful temple and burying-place of the knights, and there he was much pleased and interested. On Monday the 6th he dined at the Chief Justice Sir John Stoddart’s, when I believe he partook too freely of porter and champagne for one in his invalid state. On Tuesday morning (the 7th), on looking from one of our windows across the street, I observed him sitting in an easy chair in the parlour of his hotel, a book in his hand, and apparently reading attentively; his window was wide open, and I remember wishing much for the power of making a picture of him just as he sat But about eleven o’clock Miss Scott came over to me, looking

much frightened, and saying that she feared he was about to have another paralytic attack. He had, she said, been rather confused in mind the day before, and the dinner party had been too much for him. She had observed that on trying to answer a note from the Admiral that morning, he had not been able to form a letter on the paper, and she thought he was now sitting in a sort of stupor. She begged that Dr Davy would visit him as soon as possible, and that I would accompany him, so that he might not suppose it a *medical* visit, for to all such he had an utter objection. I sent for Dr D instantly, and the moment he returned we went together to the hotel. We found Sir Walter sitting near a fire, dressed, as I had seen him just before, in a large silk dressing-gown, his face a good deal flushed, and his eyes heavy. He rose, however, as I went up to him, and, addressing me by my mother's name, 'Mrs Fletcher,' asked kindly whether I was quite recovered from a little illness I had complained of the day before, and then walked to a table on the other side of the room, to look at some views of the new volcano in the Mediterranean, which, by way of apology for our early visit, we had carried with us. With these he seemed pleased, but there was great indistinctness in his manner of speaking. He soon after sat down, and began, of his own accord, to converse with Dr Davy on the work he was then engaged in (the Life of Sir Humphry), saying that he was truly glad he was thus engaged, as he did not think justice had been done to the character of his friend by Dr Paris. In speaking of the scientific distinction attained by Sir Humphry, he said, 'I hope, Dr Davy, your mother lived to see it. There must have been such great pleasure in that to her.' We both remember with much interest this kindly little observation, and it was but one of many that dropped from him as naturally at the different times we met, showing that, 'fallen' as the 'mighty' was, and 'his weapons of war perished,' the springs of fancy dried up, and memory on most subjects much impaired, his sense of the value of home-bred worth and affection was in full force. His way of mentioning 'my son Charles, poor fellow,' whom he was longing to meet at Naples—or 'my own Tweedside,' which in truth he seemed to lament ever having quitted—was often really affecting. Our visit together on this morning was of course short, but Dr Davy saw him repeatedly in the course of the same day. Leeches were applied to his head, and though they did not give immediate relief to his uncomfortable sensations, he was evidently much better next morning, and disposed to try a drive into the country. Some lameness having befallen one of the horses provided for his use, I, at his request, ordered a little open carriage of ours to the door about twelve o'clock, and prepared to accompany him to St Antonio, a garden residence of the Governor's, about two miles from Valetta, then occupied by Mr Frere, whose own house at the Pietà was under repair. It was not without fear and trembling I undertook this little drive—not on account of the greatness of my companion, for assuredly he was the most humane of lions, but I feared he might have some new seizure of illness, and that I should be very helpless to him in such case. I proposed that Dr D should go instead, but, like most men when they are ill or unhappy, he preferred having *womankind* about him,—said he would 'like Mrs Davy better,' so I went. The notices of his 'carriage talk' I give ex-

actly as I find them noted down the day after—omitting only the story of Sir II Davy and the Tyrolese rifle, which I put on record separately for my husband, for insertion in his book

“My little note-book of December 9 says ‘The day was very beautiful—(like a good English day about the end of May)—and the whole way in going to St Antonio he was cheerful, and inclined to talk on any matter that was suggested. He admired the streets of Valetta much as we passed through them, noticing particularly the rich effect of the carved stone balconies, and the images of saints at every corner, saying several times, ‘this town is really quite like a dream’ Something (suggested, I believe, by the appearance of Romish superstition on all sides of us) brought him to speak of the Irish, of whose native character he expressed a high opinion, and spoke most feelingly of the evil fate that seemed constantly to attend them. Some link from this subject—(I do not exactly know what—for the rattling progress of our little vehicle over ill-paved ways and his imperfect utterance together made it difficult to catch all his words)—brought to his recollection a few fine lines from ‘O’Connor’s Child,’ in the passage

“‘And ranged, as to the judgment seat,
My guilty, trembling brothers round’—

“which he repeated with his accustomed energy, and then went on to speak of Campbell, whom, as a poet, he honours. On my saying something of Campbell’s youth at the publication of his first poem, he said, ‘Ay, he was very young—but he came out at once, ye may say, like the Irish rebels, a hundred thousand strong’

“There was no possibility of admiring the face of the country as we drove along after getting clear of the city gates, but I was pleased to see how refreshing the air seemed to Sir Walter—and perhaps this made him go back, as he did, to his days of long walks, over moss and moor, which he told me he had often traversed at the rate of five and twenty miles a day, with a gun on his shoulder. He snuffed with great delight the perfume of the new oranges, which hung thickly on each side as we drove up the long avenue to the courtyard, or stable-yard rather, of St Antonio, and was amused at the Maltese untidiness of two or three pigs running at large under the trees. ‘That’s just like my friend Frere,’ he said, ‘quite content to let pigs run about in his orange groves’ We did not find Mr Fiere at home, and therefore drove back without waiting. Among some other talk, in returning, he spoke with praise of Miss Fernier as a novelist, and then with still higher praise of Miss Austen. Of the latter he said, ‘I find myself every now and then with one of her books in my hand. There’s a finishing-off in some of her scenes that is really quite above everybody else. And there’s that Irish lady, too—but I forget everybody’s name now’—‘Miss Edgeworth,’ I said,—‘Ay, Miss Edgeworth, she’s *very* clever, and best in the little touches, too. I’m sure, in that children’s story’—(he meant ‘Simple Susan,’)—‘where the little girl parts with her lamb, and the little boy brings it back to her again, there’s nothing for it but just to put down the book, and cry’—A little afterwards, he said, ‘Do you know Moore?—he’s a charming

fellow—a perfect gentleman in society ; to use a sporting phrase, there's no kick in his gallop'

"As we drew near home, I thought him somewhat fatigued—he was more confused than at first in his recollection of names—and we drove on without saying anything. But I shall not forget the kindly good humour with which he said, in getting out at his hotel door—'Thank ye, for your kindness—your charity, I may say—to an old 'lane man—farewell!' He did not seem the worse of his little exertion this day, but, thenceforward, was prudent in refusing all dinner invitations.

"On Friday (December 10th), he went, in company with Mr Frere, to see Citta Vecchia. I drove over with a lady friend to meet them at the church there. Sir Walter seemed pleased with what was shown him, but was not so animated.—On Saturday the 11th he drove out twice to see various things in Valetta.—On Monday morning the 13th I saw him for the last time, when I called to take leave of Miss Scott. Dr Davy accompanied him, in the course of the following morning, to see Strada Stretta, the part of the city in which he had been told the young knights of Malta used to fight their duels, when such affairs occurred. In quitting the street, Sir Walter looked round him earnestly, and said, 'It will be hard if I cannot make something of this.' On that day, Tuesday morning, December 14th, he and his party went again on board the *Barham*, and sailed for Naples."

On the 17th of December the *Barham* reached Naples, and Sir Walter found his son Charles ready to receive him. The quarantine was cut short by the courtesy of the King of Naples, and the travellers established themselves in an apartment of the *Palazzo Caramanico*.

Here again the British Minister, Mr Hill (now Lord Berwick), and the English nobility and gentry then residing in Naples, did whatever kindness and respect could suggest for Sir Walter, nor were the natives and their visitants from foreign countries less attentive. The Marquis of Hertford, the Hon Keppel Craven, the Hon William Ashley and his lady, Sir George Talbot, the venerable Matthias, author of *The Pursuits of Literature*, Mr Anbjo (celebrated for his ascent of Mont Blanc), and Dr Hogg, a medical gentleman who has since published an account of his travels in the East—appear to have, in their various ways, contributed whatever they could to his comfort and amusement. But the person of whom he saw most was the late Sir William Gell, who had long been condemned to live in Italy by ailments and infirmities not dissimilar to his own. Sir William, shortly after Sir Walter's death, drew up a memoir of their intercourse, parts of which will, I believe, be considered as sufficient for this period.

Before I introduce it, however, I may notice that Sir Walter, whenever he appeared at the Neapolitan Court, which he did several times, wore the uniform of a Brigadier-General in the ancient Body Guard of Scotland, a dress of light green, with gold embroidery, assigned to, those Archers by George IV at the termination of his northern progress in 1822. I have observed this circumstance alluded to with a sort of sneer. The truth is, Sir Walter had ordered the dress for the christening of the young Buccleuch, but at any rate, the machinery now attached to his

lame limb, would have made it impossible for him to appear in breeches and stockings, as was then imperative on civilians

It was on the 16th of January that Sir Walter received the intelligence of his grandson's death. His Diary of that date was simply these words—"Poor Johnny Lockhart! This boy is gone whom we have made so much of. I could not have borne it better than I now do, and I might have borne it much worse—I went to the Opera in the evening to see this amusement in its birthplace, which is now so widely received over Europe."

At first Sir Walter busied himself chiefly about forming a collection of Neapolitan and Sicilian ballads and broadsides, and Mr Matthias seems to have been at much pains in helping this. But, alas! ere he had been long in Naples, he began, in spite of all remonstrances, to give several hours every morning to the composition of a new novel, "The Siege of Malta," and during his stay he nearly finished both this and a shorter tale, entitled "Bizarro." He also relaxed more and more in his obedience to the regimen of his physicians, and thus applied a twofold stimulus to his malady.

Neither of these novels will ever, I hope, see the light, but I venture to give the foundation of the shorter one, as nearly as I can decipher it from the author's Diary, of which it occupies some of the last pages.

"DEATH OF IL BIZARRO"

"This man was called, from his wily but inexorable temper, *Il Bizarro*. He was captain of a gang of banditti, whom he governed by his own authority, till he increased them to 1,000 men, both on foot and horseback, whom he maintained in the mountains of Calabria, between the French and Neapolitans, both of which he defied, and pillaged the country. High rewards were set upon his head, to very little purpose, as he took care to guard himself against being betrayed by his own gang, the common fate of those banditti who become great in their vocation. At length a French colonel, whose name I have forgot, occupied the country of Bizarro, with such success that he formed a cordon around him and his party, and included him between the folds of a military column. Wellnigh driven to submit himself, the robber with his wife, a very handsome woman, and a child of a few months old, took post one day beneath an old bridge, and by an escape almost miraculous, were not perceived by a strong party whom the French maintained on the top of the arch. Night at length came without a discovery, which every moment might have made. When it became quite dark the brigand, enjoining the strictest silence on the female and child, resolved to start from his place of shelter, and as he issued forth kept his hand on the child's throat. But as when they began to move the child naturally cried, its father in a rage tightened his gripe so relentlessly that the poor infant never offended more in the same manner.

"His wife had never been very fond of him, though he trusted her more than any who approached him. She had been originally the wife of another man murdered by her second husband, which second marriage she was compelled to undergo, and to affect at least the conduct of an affectionate wife. In their wanderings she alone knew where he slept

He left his men in a body upon the top of a hill, round which they set watches. He then went apart into the woods with his wife, and having chosen a lair in an obscure and deep thicket, there took up his residence for the night. A large Calabrian dog, his constant attendant, was then tied to a tree at some distance to secure his slumbers, and, having placed his carbine within reach of his arm, he consigned himself to such sleep as belongs to his calling. By such precautions he had secured his rest for many years.

"But after the death of the child, the measure of his offence towards the unhappy mother was full to the brim, and her thoughts became determined on revenge. One evening he took up his quarters with the usual precautions, but without the usual success. He had laid his carbine near him, and betaken himself to rest, when his partner arose from his side, and ere he became sensible that she had done so, she seized his carbine, and discharging it in his bosom, ended at once his life and his crimes. She finished her work by cutting off the brigand's head, and carrying it to the principal town of the province, where she delivered it to the police, and claimed the reward attached to his head, which was paid accordingly. This female still lives, a stately, dangerous-looking woman, yet scarce ill thought of, considering the provocation.

"The dog struggled extremely to get loose on hearing the shot. Some say the female shot it, others that in its rage it very nearly gnawed through the stout young tree to which it was tied. He was worthy of a better master.

"The distant encampment of the band was disturbed by the firing of the Bizarro's carbine at midnight. They ran through the woods to seek the captain, but finding him lifeless and headless, they became so much surprised that many of them surrendered to the Government and relinquished their trade. Thus the band of the Bizarro, as it lived by his spirit, was broken up by his death.

"Among other stories respecting the cruelty of this bandit, I heard this. A French officer, who had been active in the pursuit of him, fell into his hands, and was made to die the death of Saint Polycarp—that is, the period being the middle of summer, he was flayed alive, and being smeared with honey, was exposed to all the intolerable insects of a southern sky. The corps were also informed where they might find their officer, if they thought proper to send for him. As more than two days elapsed before the wretched man was found, nothing save miserable relics were discovered. I do not warrant these stories, but such are told currently."

Here is another—taken, I believe, from one of the rude pamphlets in his collection.

"There was a farmer of an easy fortune, and who might be supposed to leave to his daughter, a very pretty girl, and an only child, a fortune thought in the village to be very considerable. She was, under the hope of sharing such a prize, made up to by a young man in the neighbourhood, handsome, active, and of good character. He was of that sort of persons who are generally successful among women, and this girl was supposed to have encouraged his addresses, but her father, on being

applied to, gave him a direct and positive refusal. The gallant resolved to continue his addresses in hopes of overcoming the obstacle by his perseverance, but the father's opposition seemed only to increase by the lover's pertinacity. At length, as the farmer walked one evening, smoking his pipe upon the terrace before his door, the lover unhappily passed by, and, struck with the instant thought that the obstacle to the happiness of his life was now entirely in his own power, he rushed upon the father, pierced him with three mortal stabs of his knife, and made his escape to the mountains.

"What was most remarkable was that he was protected against the police, who went, as was their duty, in quest of him, by the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, who afforded him both shelter and such food as he required, looking on him less as a wilful criminal than an unfortunate man, who had been surprised by a strong and almost irresistible temptation, so congenial at this moment is the love of vengeance to an Italian bosom, and, though chastised in general by severe punishment, so much are criminals sympathized with by the community."

I now insert the Neapolitan part of Sir William Gell's Memoranda.

"Every record of the latter days of those who, by their actions or their talents, have excited the admiration and occupied the attention of their contemporaries, has been thought worthy of preservation, and I feel, on that account, a melancholy pleasure in complying with the request that I would furnish such anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott as my short intimacy with that illustrious personage may have afforded. The reason assigned in the letter, which I received from one of the family on the subject, was that I was his 'latest friend,' and this appeared to me as strong a motive as if I could have been called his earliest acquaintance.

"I had met Sir Walter at Stanmore Priory many years ago, when on a visit to the late Marquis of Abercorn, where he read one of the earliest of his poetical productions, but I had no further personal communication with him till his arrival at Naples. I was induced to call on him at the Palazzo Caramanico, at the desire of a mutual friend, on the 5th of January, 1832, and it is probable that our mutual infirmities, which made us suitable companions in excursions, contributed in a great degree to the intimacy which immediately took place between us. On the following evening I presented to him Mr Keppel Craven, whose Tour in the South of Italy he had just read with pleasure. From this time I was constantly in the habit of receiving or calling for Sir Walter in the morning, and usually accompanied him to see any of the remarkable objects in the neighbourhood of Naples. The Lago d'Agnano was among the first places visited, and he was evidently quite delighted with the tranquil beauty of the spot, and struck particularly by the sight of the leaves yet lingering on the trees at so advanced a period of the winter, and the appearance of summer yet maintained by the meadows and copses surrounding the lake. It quickly recalled to his mind a lake in Scotland, which he immediately began to describe. I afterwards found that his only pleasure in seeing new places arose from the poetical ideas they inspired, as applicable to other scenes with which his mind was more familiar.

' Mr Craven accompanied us on horseback in this excursion, and Sir Walter learning that he was writing a second volume, giving an account of a journey in the Abruzzi, kindly observed, that he thought he could be of use to him in the publication of it, adding, ' I think I may, perhaps, be able to give his pancake a toss '

" On the 10th of January I accompanied him to Pozzuoli, and the late Mr Laing Meason was of the party. Here we succeeded in getting Sir Walter placed upon a heap of ruins, whence he might see the remains of the *Thermae*, commonly called the Temple of *Serapis*. His observation was, that we might tell him anything, and he would believe it all, for many of his friends, and particularly Mr Morritt, had frequently tried to drive classical antiquities, as they were called, into his head, but they had always found his 'skull too thick '

" It was with great risk that he could be brought to any point of difficult access, for though he was so lame, and saw how easily I arrived by submitting to be assisted or carried, it was generally impossible to persuade him to commit himself to the care of the attendants

" When Sir Walter was presented at Court, the King received him with marked attention, and insisted on his being seated, on account of his infirmity. They both spoke, and the bystanders observed that His Majesty mentioned the pleasure he had received from reading the works of his visitor. Sir Walter answered in French, but not in a clear tone of voice, and he afterwards observed that he and the King parted mutually pleased with the interview, considering that neither had heard one word of what was uttered by the other

" On the 17th of January I took Sir Walter to dine with the venerable Archbishop of Tarentum, a prelate in his 90th year, but yet retaining his faculties unimpaired, and the warmer feelings of youth, with well-known hospitality. The two elders seemed mutually pleased with the interview, but the difficulties of language were opposed to any very agreeable conversation

" On the 26th of January I attended Sir Walter in a boat, with several friends to the ruins of a Roman villa, supposed by Mr Hamilton and others to have been that of *Pollio*, and situated upon a rock in the sea at the extremity of the promontory of *Posilipo*. It was by no means the recollection of *Pollio* that induced Sir Walter to make this excursion. A story existed that out of an opening in the floor of one of the rooms in this villa, a spectre robed in white occasionally appeared, whence the place had acquired the name of *La Casa degli Spiriti*, and none had presumed to inhabit it. The fact was, that a third story had been built upon the Roman ruins and this being only inhabited by paupers, had fallen into decay, so as to endanger one angle of the fabric, and the police, for fear of accident, had ordered that it should remain untenanted. The house is situated upon a rock projecting into the sea, but attached on one side to the mainland. An entrance for a boat has been left in the basement story, and it is probable that a sort of open court, into which the sea enters at the back of the house, and in which is the staircase, was constructed for the purpose of cooling the apartments in the heat of summer, by means of the perpetual heaving and sinking of the ocean which takes place even in the calmest weather. The staircase was too

much ruined for Sir Walter to ascend with safety, but he appeared satisfied with what he saw, and took some interest in the prools which the appearance of the *opus reticulatum*, high up in the external walls, afforded of the antiquity of the place *

"On the 9th of February Sir Walter went to Pompen, where, with several ladies and gentlemen at that time resident in Naples, I accompanied him. I did not go in the same carriage, but arriving at the Street of the Tombs, found him already almost tired before he had advanced 100 yards. With great difficulty I forced him to accept the chair in which I was carried, supplying its place with another for myself, tied together with cords and handkerchiefs. He thus was enabled to pass through the city without more fatigue, and I was sometimes enabled to call his attention to such objects as were the most worthy of remark. To these observations, however, he seemed generally nearly insensible, viewing the whole and not the parts, with the eye, not of an antiquary, but a poet, and exclaiming frequently, 'The City of the Dead,' without any other remark. An excavation had been ordered for him, but it produced nothing more than a few bells, hinges, and other objects of brass, which are found every day. Sir Walter seemed to view, however, the splendid mosaic, representing a combat of the Greeks and Persians, with more interest, and, seated upon a table whence he could look down upon it, he remained some time to examine it. We dined at a large table spread in the Forum, and Sir Walter was cheerful and pleased. In the evening he was a little tired, but felt no bad effects from the excursion to the City of the Dead.

"In our morning drives, Sir Walter always noticed a favourite dog of mine, which was usually in the carriage, and generally patted the animal's head for some time, saying, 'poor boy—poor boy.' 'I have got at home,' said he, 'two very fine favourite dogs, so large that I am almost afraid they look too handsome and too feudal for my diminished income. I am very fond of them, but they are so large it was impossible to take them with me.' My dog was in the habit of howling when loud music was performing, and Sir Walter laughed till his eyes were full of tears, at the idea of the dog singing 'My mother bids me bind my hair,' by the tune of which the animal seemed most excited, and which the kind-hearted baronet sometimes asked to have repeated.

"I do not remember on what day, during his residence at Naples, he came one morning rather early to my house, to tell me he was sure I should be pleased at some good luck which had befallen him, and of which he had just received notice. This was, as he said, an account from his friends in England that his last works, *Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*, had gone on to a second edition. He told me in the carriage that he felt quite relieved by his letters, 'for,' said he, 'I could have never slept straight in my coffin till I had satisfied every claim against me.' 'And now,' added he to the dog, 'my poor boy, I shall have my house, and my estate round it, free, and I may keep my dogs as big and as many as I choose, without fear of reproach.'

"I do not recollect the date of a certain morning's drive, on which he

* There is an interesting Essay on this Roman Villa, by Mr Hamilton, in the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature for 1837.

first communicated to me that he had already written, or at least advanced far in a romance, on the subject of Malta, a part of which, he said, laughingly, he had put into the fire by mistake for other papers, but which he thought he had rewritten better than before. He asked me about the island of Rhodes, and told me, that, being relieved from debt, and no longer forced to write for money, he lounged to turn to poetry again, and to see whether, in his old age, he was not capable of equalling the rhymes of his youthful days. I encouraged him in this project, and asked why he had ever relinquished poetry. 'Because Byron *bet* me,' said he, pronouncing the word, *beat*, short*. I rejoined, that I thought I could remember by heart about as many passages of his poetry as of Lord Byron's, and to this he replied, 'That may be, but he *bet* me out of the field in the description of the strong passions, and in deep-seated knowledge of the human heart, so I gave up poetry for the time.' He became from that moment extremely curious about Rhodes, and having chosen for his poetical subject the chivalrous story of the slaying of the dragon by De Gozon and the stratagems and valour with which he conceived and executed his purpose, he was quite delighted to hear that I had seen the skeleton of this real or reported dragon, which yet remains secured by large iron staples to the vaulted roof of one of the gates of the city.

"Rhodes became at this time an object of great importance and curiosity to him, and as he had indulged in the idea of visiting it, he was somewhat displeased to learn how very far distant it lay from Corfu, where he had proposed to pass some time with Sir Frederick Adam, then Lord High Commissioner in the Ionian Islands.

"I must not omit stating that at an early period of his visit to Naples, an old English manuscript of the romance of Sir Bevis of Hampton, existing in the Royal Library, had attracted his attention; and he had resolved on procuring a copy of it, not, I think, for himself, but for a friend in Scotland, who was already possessed of another edition. When Sir Walter visited the library at the Museum, the literati of Naples crowded round him to catch a sight of so celebrated a person, and they showed him every mark of attention in their power, by creating him honorary member of their learned societies. Complimentary speeches were addressed to him in Latin, of which, unfortunately, he did not comprehend one word, on account of the difference of pronunciation, but from the confession of which he was saved by the intervention of Mr Keppel Craven, who attended him. The King of Naples, learning his wish to copy the book, ordered it to be sent to his house, and he employed a person of the name of Stacchini, who, without understanding a word of English, copied the whole in a character as nearly as possible the facsimile of the original. Stacchini was surprised and charmed with Sir Walter's kindness and urbanity, for he generally called him to breakfast, and sometimes to dinner, and treated him on all occasions in the most condescending manner. The secretary was not less surprised than alarmed on seeing his patron not unfrequently trip his foot against a chair and fall down upon the floor, for

* The common Scotch pronunciation is not unlike what Sir W. G. gives

he was extremely incautious as to where or how he walked. On these occasions, while the frightened Stacchini ran to assist him, Sir Walter laughed very good-humouredly, refused all help, and only expressed his anxiety lest his spectacles should have been broken by the accident.* Sir Walter wished, during his stay at Naples, to procure several Italian books in his particular department of study. Among other curiosities he thought he had traced Mother Goose, if not to her origin at Naples, at least to a remote period of antiquity in Italy. He succeeded in purchasing a considerable number of books in addition to his library, and took the fancy to have them all bound in vellum.

"Sir Walter had heard too much of Paestum to quit Naples without seeing it, and we accordingly formed a party in two carriages to go there, intending to sleep at La Cava, at the villa of my much-respected friend, Miss Whyte, a lady not less esteemed for every good quality, than celebrated for her extraordinary exertions of benevolence on the occasion of the murder of the Hunt family at Paestum. Hearing of this fatal affair, and being nearer than any other of her compatriots to the scene, this lady immediately endeavoured to engage a surgeon at La Cava to accompany her to the spot. No one, however, could be found to venture into the den of the murderers, so that she resolved to go alone, well provided with lint, medicines, and all that could be useful to the wounded persons. She arrived, however, too late to be of use, but Sir Walter expressed the greatest desire to make the acquaintance of so admirable a person, and it was settled that her hospitable villa should receive and lodge us on our way to Paestum. La Cava is twenty-five miles from Naples, and as it was necessary to feed the horses, I was in hopes of showing Sir Walter the amphitheatre of Pompeii while they ate their corn. The day, however, being rainy, we gave up the amphitheatre, and halted at the little tavern immediately below Pompeii. Here, being obliged to remain, it was thought advisable to eat, and I had an opportunity of witnessing the hospitality which I had always heard distinguished Sir Walter, for, after we had finished, not only the servants were fed with the provisions he had brought, but the whole remainder was distributed to the poor people who had been driven into the tavern by the rain. This liberality unfortunately occasioned a deficit on the following day, when the party started without provision for the solitudes of Paestum.

"Near Nocera I pointed out a tower situated upon a high mountain, and guarding a pass by which a very steep and zig-zag road leads toward Amalfi. I observed that it was possible that if the Saracens were ever really seated at Nocera dei Pagani, this tower might have been at the confines of the Amalfitan Republic, and have been their frontier against the Mahometans. It was surprising how quickly he caught at any romantic circumstance, and I found, in a very short time, he had converted the Torre de Chunse, or Chiunse, into a feudal residence, and already peopled it with a Christian host. He called it the Knight's Castle, as long as it remained in sight, and soon after transferred its interest to the curious little towers, used for pigeon-shooting,

* The spectacles were valued as the gift of a friend and brother poet, Rogers

which abound in the neighbourhood, though they were on the other side of the road

"From La Cava the party proceeded the next day to Paestum, setting out early in the morning, but I did not accompany Sir Walter on that journey, and consequently only know that, by good luck, he found eggs and other rustic fare near the temples, and returned, after a drive of fifty-four miles, very much fatigued, to a late dinner. He was, however, completely restored by the night's rest, and we visited on the following day the splendid Benedictine Monastery of La Trinità della Cava, situated about three miles from the great road, and approached through a beautiful forest of chestnuts, spreading over most picturesque mountains. The day was fine, and Sir Walter really enjoyed the drive, and the scenery recalled to his mind something of the kind which he had seen in Scotland, on which he repeated the whole of the ballad of Jock of Hazeldean with great emphasis and in a clear voice. At the convent we had taken care to request that what is termed a Pontifical Mass should be sung in his presence, after which he was taken, with much difficulty, and twice falling, through the long and slippery labyrinths of that vast edifice, and up several very tedious staircases to the apartments containing the archives. Here the curious MSS of the convent were placed before him, and he seemed delighted with an ancient document in which the names of Saracens as well as Christians appear either as witnesses or principals, but he was chiefly struck with a book containing pictures of the Lombard Kings, of which, through the kindness of Doctor Hogg, he afterwards possessed copies by a young Neapolitan painter who had chanced to be on the spot. On the whole, Sir Walter was more pleased with the Monastery of La Cava than with any place to which I had the honour to accompany him in Italy, the site, the woods, the organ, the size of the convent, and, above all, the Lombard Kings, produced a poetical feeling, and the fine weather so raised his spirits, that in the forest he again recited Jock of Hazeldean by my desire, after a long repetition from his favourite poem of Hardyknute.

"On the following day we returned to Naples, but Sir Walter went in his own carriage, and complained to me afterwards that he had never been able to discover the 'Knight's Tower,' it being, in fact, only visible by turning back to a person travelling in that direction. He expressed himself at all times much delighted with our amiable hostess, Miss Whyte, remarking very justly that she had nothing cold about her but her house, which being in the mountains is, in fact, by no means eligible at that season of the year.

"In one of our drives the subject of Sir Walter's perhaps most popular romance, in which Lady Margaret Bellenden defends the castle of Tillietudlem, was mentioned as having been translated into Italian under the title of 'The Scottish Puritans,' of which he highly approved. I told him how strange the names of the places and the personages appeared in their Italian garb, and remarked that the castle was so well described, and seemed so true a picture, that I had always imagined he must have had some real fortress in view. He said it was very true, for the castle he had visited, and had fallen so much in love with it that he wanted to live there. He added a joke with regard to his having taken his hat off

when he visited this favourite spot, remarking that as the castle had been uncovered for many centuries, he himself might be uncovered for an hour 'It had,' said Sir Walter, 'no roof, no windows, and not much wall I should have had to make three miles of road, so before the affair was settled I got wiser'

"On the 3rd of April I accompanied Sir Walter to Pozzuoli and to Cumæ. We had a party of nine or ten ladies and gentlemen, and agreed to dine at the inn at Pozzuoli on our way back. I explained to Sir Walter the common history of all the objects which occurred on the road, and the account of Monte Nuovo, which rose in one night to its present elevation, destroying the village of Tre Pergole and part of the Lucerne Lake, seemed particularly to strike his poetical imagination. There is a point in going toward the Arco Felice, whence, at a turn of the road, a very extensive and comprehensive view is obtained of the Lake of Avernus. The Temple of Apollo, the Lucerne Lake, the Monte Nuovo, Baïæ, Misenum, and the sea, are all seen at once, and here I considered it my duty, in quality of *cicerone*, to enforce the knowledge of the localities. He attended to the names I repeated, and when I asked whether he thought himself sure of remembering the spot, he replied that he had it perfectly in his mind. I found, however, that something in the place had inspired him with other recollections of his own beloved country and the Stuarts, for on proceeding, he immediately repeated in a grave tone and with great emphasis—

"'Up the craggy mountain, and down the mossy glen,
We canna gang r-mulking, for Charlie and his men'

"I could not help smiling at this strange commentary on my dissertation upon the Lake of Avernus"

While at Naples, Sir Walter wrote frequently to his daughter Sophia, Mr Cadell, Mr Laudlaw, and myself. Some of these letters were of a very melancholy cast, for the dream about his debts being all settled was occasionally broken, and probably it was when that left him that he worked hardest at his novels—though the habit of working had become so fixed that I may be wrong in this conjecture. In general, however, these last letters tell the same story of delusive hopes both as to health and wealth, of satisfaction in the resumption of his pen, of eagerness to be once more at Abbotsford, and of affectionate anxiety about the friends he was there to rejoin. Every one of those to Laudlaw has something about the poor people and the dogs. One to myself conveyed his desire that he might be set down for "something as handsome as I liked" in a subscription then thought of for the Ettrick Shepherd, who that spring visited London, and was in no respect improved by his visit. Another to my wife bade her purchase a grand pianoforte which he wished to present to Miss Cadell, his bookseller's daughter. The same generous spirit was shown in many other communications.

I must transcribe one of Sir Walter's letters from Naples. It was addressed to Mrs Scott of Harden, on the marriage of her daughter Anne to Charles Baulhe, Esq, a son of her neighbour in the country, Mr. Baulhe of Jerviswood.

To Mrs Scott, of Harden.

"Naples, Palazzo Caramanico, 6th March, 1832

"MY DEAREST MRS SCOTT,—

"Your kind letter of 8th October, addressed to Malta, reached me only yesterday, with a number of others which had been tarrying at Jericho till their beards grew. This was in one respect inconvenient, as I did not gain the benefit of your advice with regard to my travels, which would have had a great influence with me. Moreover, I did not learn the happy event in your own family till a newspaper told it me by accident long ago. But as my good wishes are most sincere, it is of less consequence when they reach the parties concerned, and I flatter myself I possess so much interest with my young friends as to give me credit for most warmly wishing them all the happiness which this auspicious event promises. The connexion must be in every respect agreeable to the feelings of both families, and not less so to those of a former generation, provided they are permitted, as I flatter myself, to take interest in the affairs of this life.

"I envied your management of the pencil when at Malta, as frequently elsewhere, it is quite a place made to be illustrated, by the way, I have got an esquisse of Old Smallholm Tower from the pencil of Mr Turner. Besides the other advantages of Malta, it possesses John Hookham Frere, who is one of the most entertaining men I know, and with whom I spent much of my time.

"Although I rather prefer Malta, I have no reason to complain of Naples. The society is very numerous and gay, and somewhat too frivolous for my time of life and infirmities, however, there are exceptions, especially poor Sir William Gell, a very accomplished scholar, who is lazier than I am, and never out of humour, though worried perpetually by the gout, which he bears with the greatest complaisance. He is engaged in vindicating, from the remains of the various public works in Italy, the truth, which Bryant and others have disputed, concerning the Roman History as given by Livy and other authors, whom it has been of late fashionable to discredit. The Dilettante Society have, greatly to their credit, resolved to bring out this interesting book.

"It has been Carnival-time, and the balls are without number, besides being pelted to death with sugar-plums, which is quite the rage. But now Lent is approaching to sober us after all our gaiety, and every one seems ashamed of being happy, and preparing to look grave with all his might.

"I should have said something of my health, but have nothing to say except that I am pretty well and take exercise regularly, though, as Parson Adams says, it must be of the vehicular kind. I think I shall never ride or walk again. But I must not complain, for my plan of paying my debts, which you know gave me so much trouble some years since, has been, thank God, completely successful, and, what I think worth telling, I have paid very near £120,000, without owing any one a halfpenny—at least I am sure this will be the case by midsummer. I know the laird will give me much joy on this occasion, which, considering the scale upon which I have accomplished it, is a great feat. I wish

I were better worthy the kindness of the public, but I am at least entitled to say

“‘Twas meant for merit, though it fell on me.’”

“Also some industry and some steadiness were necessary. I believe, indeed, I made too great an exertion, but if I get better, as seems likely, it is little enough for so happy a result. The young people have been very happy, which makes me think that about next spring I will give your young couple a neighbourly dance. It will be about this time that I take the management of my affairs again. You must patronize me.

“My love to Henry, as well as to the young couple. He should go and do likewise.—Your somewhat ancient, but very sincere friend,

“WALTER SCOTT”

His friend Sir Frederick Adam had urgently invited Sir Walter to visit the Ionian Islands, and he had consented to do so. But Sir Frederick was suddenly recalled from that Government, and appointed to one in India, and the Greek scheme dropped. From that time his companions ceased to contend against his wishes for returning home. Since he would again work, what good end could it serve to keep him from working at his own desk? And as their entreaties, and the warnings of foreign doctors, proved alike unavailing as to the regulation of his diet, what remaining chance could there be on that score, unless from replacing him under the eye of the friendly physicians whose authority had formerly seemed to have due influence on his mind? He had wished to return by the route of the Tyrol and Germany, partly for the sake of the remarkable chapel and monuments of the old Austrian princes at Inspruck, and the scud it runs upon the Rhine, but chiefly that he might have an interview with Goethe at Weimar. That poet died on the 23rd of March, and the news seemed to act upon Scott exactly as the illness of Borthwickbrae had done in the August before. His impatience redoubled all his fine dreams of recovery seemed to vanish at once. “Alas for Goethe!” he exclaimed, “but he at least died at home. Let us to Abbotsford.” And he quotes more than once in his letters the first hemistich of the line from Politian with which he had closed his early memoir of Leyden—*“Grata quis Patriæ”*

When the season was sufficiently advanced, then, the party set out, Mr Charles Scott having obtained leave to accompany his father, which was quite necessary, as his elder brother had already been obliged to rejoin his regiment. They quitted Naples on the 16th of April, in an open bronche, which could at pleasure be converted into a bed.

It will be seen from some memoranda about to be quoted, that Sir Walter was somewhat interested by a few of the objects presented to him in the earlier stages of his route. The certainty that he was on his way home for a time soothed and composed him, and amidst the agreeable society which again surrounded him on his arrival in Rome, he seemed perhaps as much himself as he had ever been in Malta or in Naples. For a moment even his literary hope and ardour appear to have revived. But still his daughter entertained no doubt, that his consenting to pause for even a few days in Rome was dictated mainly by consideration of her

LIFE OF SIR WALTER SCOTT.

natural curiosity Sir William Gell went to Rome about the same time and Sir Walter was introduced there to another accomplished countryman, who exerted himself no less than did Sir William to render his stay agreeable to him. This was Mr Edward Cheney, whose family had long been on terms of very strict intimacy with the Maclean Clephanes of Torloisk, so that Sir Walter was ready to regard him at first sight as a friend.

"At Rome" (says Gell) "Sir Walter found an apartment provided for him in the Casa Bernini. On his arrival he seemed to have suffered but little from the journey, though I believe the length of time he was obliged to sit in a carriage had been occasionally the cause of troublesome symptoms. I found him, however, in very good spirits, and as he was always eager to see any spot remarkable as the scene of particular events recorded in history, so he was keenly bent on visiting the house where Benvenuto Cellini writes that he slew the Constable of Bourbon with a bullet fired from the Castle of St. Angelo. The Chevalier Luigi Chavert took him to the place, of which, though he quickly forgot the position, he yet retained the lustory firmly fixed in his mind, and to which he very frequently recurred."

"The introduction of Mr Cheney was productive of great pleasure to Sir Walter, as he possessed at that moment the Villa Muti, at Frascati, which had been for many years the favourite residence of the Cardinal of York, who was Bishop of Tusculum."

"Soon after his arrival I took Sir Walter to St. Peter's, which he had resolved to visit, that he might see the tomb of the last of the Stuarts. I took him to one of the side doors in order to shorten the walk, and by great good fortune met with Colonel Blair and Mr Phillips, under whose protection he accomplished his purpose. We contrived to tie a glove round the point of his stick to prevent his slipping in some degree, but to conduct him was really a service of danger and alarm, owing to his infirmity and total want of caution. He has been censured for not having frequently visited the treasures of the Vatican—but by those only who were unacquainted with the difficulty with which he moved. Days and weeks must have been passed in this immense museum, in order to have given him any idea of its value, nor do I know that it would have been possible for him to have ascended the rugged stairs, or to have traced its corridors and interminable galleries, in the state of reduced strength and dislike to being assisted under which he then laboured."

"On the 8th of May we all dined at the palace of the Duchess Torlonia with a very large company. The dinner was very late and very splendid, and from the known hospitality of the family it was probable that Sir Walter, in the heat of conversation, and with servants on all sides pressing him to eat and drink, as is their custom at Rome, might be induced to eat more than was safe for his malady. Colonel Blair, who sat next him, was requested to take care that this should not happen. Whenever I observed him, however, Sir Walter appeared always to be eating, while the Duchess, who had discovered the nature of the office imposed on the Colonel, was by no means satisfied, and after dinner observed that it was an odd sort of friendship which consisted in starving

one's neighbour to death when he had a good appetite and there was dinner enough.

"It was at this entertainment that Sir Walter met with the Duke and Duchess of Corbiano, who were both well read in his works, and delighted to have been in company with him. This acquaintance might have led to some agreeable consequences had Sir Walter's life been spared, for the Duke told him he was possessed of a vast collection of papers, giving true accounts of all the murders, poisonings, intrigues, and curious adventures of all the great Roman families during many centuries, all which were at his service to copy and publish in his own way as historical romances, only disguising the names, so as not to compromise the credit of the existing descendants of the families in question. Sir Walter listened to the Duke for the remainder of the evening, and was so captivated with all he heard from that amiable and accomplished personage, that at one moment he thought of remaining for a time at Rome, and at another he vowed he would return there in the ensuing winter. Whoever has read any of these memoirs of Italian families, of which many are published and very many exist in manuscript, will acknowledge how they abound in strange events and romantic stories, and may form some idea of the delight with which Sir Walter imagined himself on the point of possessing upon a treasure after his own heart.

"The eldest son of the Torlonia family is the possessor of the castle of Bracciano, of which he is duke. Sir Walter was anxious to see it, and cited some story, I think of the Orsini, who once were lords of the place. We had permission to visit the castle, and the steward had orders to furnish us with whatever was requisite. We set off on the 9th of May, Sir Walter as usual coming with me, and two ladies and two gentlemen occupying his carriage. One of these last was the son of the Duke of Scambrata, Don Michelangelo Grietani, a person of the most amiable disposition, gentlemanly manners, and most remarkable talents. Sir Walter, to whom he had paid every attention during his stay at Rome, had conceived a high opinion of him, and, added to his agreeable qualities, he had a wonderful and accurate knowledge of the history of his own country during the darker ages. The Grietani figured also among the most ancient and most turbulent of the Roman families during the middle ages and these historical qualities, added to the amenity of his manners, rendered him naturally a favourite with Sir Walter.

"We arrived at Bracciano, twenty-five miles from Rome, rather fatigued with the roughness of an old Roman road, the pavement of which had generally been half destroyed, and the stones left in disorder on the spot. He was pleased with the general appearance of that stately pile, which is finely seated upon a rock, commanding on one side the view of the beautiful lake with its wooded shores, and on the other overlooking the town of Bracciano. A carriage could not easily ascend to the court, so that Sir Walter fatigued himself still more, as he was not content to be assisted, by walking up the steep and somewhat long ascent to the gateway. He was struck with the sombre appearance of the Gothic towers, built with the black lava which had once formed the pavement of the Roman road, and which adds much to its flowing magnificence. In the interior he could not but be pleased with the grand suite of state apartments, all yet

habitable, and even retaining in some rooms the old furniture and the rich silk hangings of the Orsini and Odescalchi. These chambers overlook the lake, and Sir Walter sat in a window for a long time, during a delightful evening, to enjoy the prospect. A very large dog, of the breed called Danish, coming to fawn upon him, he told it he was glad to see it, for it was a proper accompaniment to such a castle, but that he had a larger dog at home, though maybe not so good-natured to strangers. This notice of the dog seemed to gain the heart of the steward, and he accompanied Sir Walter in a second tour through the grand suite of rooms, each, as Sir Walter observed, highly pleased with the other's conversation, though, as one spoke French and the other Italian, little of it could be understood. Toward the town, a range of smaller apartments are more convenient, except during the heats of summer, than the great rooms for a small party, and in these we dined and found chambers for sleeping. At night we had tea and a large fire, and Sir Walter conversed cheerfully. Some of the party went out to walk round the battlements of the castle by moonlight, and a ghost was talked of among the usual accompaniments of such situations. He told me that the best way of making a ghost was to paint it with white on tin, for that in the dusk, after it had been seen, it could be instantly made to vanish by turning the edge, almost without thickness, towards the spectator.

"On coming down next morning I found that Sir Walter, who rose early, had already made another tour over part of the castle with the steward and the dog. After breakfast we set out on our return to Rome, and all the way his conversation was more delightful, and more replete with anecdotes, than I had ever known it. He talked a great deal to young Gaetano, who sat on the box, and he invited him to Scotland. He asked me when I thought of revisiting England, and I replied that if my health permitted at a moment when I could afford it, I might perhaps be tempted in the course of the following summer. 'If the money be the difficulty,' said the kind-hearted baronet, 'don't let that hinder you, I've £300 at your service, and I have a perfect right to give it you, and nobody can complain of me, for I made it myself.'

"He continued to press my acceptance of this sum, till I requested him to drop the subject, thanking him most gratefully for his goodness, and much flattered by so convincing a proof of his desire to see me at Abbotsford.

"I remember particularly a remark, which proved the kindness of his heart. A lady requested him to do something which was very disagreeable to him. He was asked whether he had consented. He replied, 'Yes.' He was then questioned why he had agreed to do what was so inconvenient to him. 'Why,' said he, 'as I am now good for nothing else, I think it as well to be good-natured.'

'I took my leave of my respected friend on the 10th May, 1832. I knew this great genius and estimable man but for a short period, but it was at an interesting moment, and being both invalids, and impressed equally with the same conviction that we had no time to lose, we seemed to become intimate without passing through the usual gradations of friendship. I remember just enough of Scottish topography and northern

antiquities in general to be able to ask questions on subjects on which his knowledge was super-eminent, and to be delighted and edified by his inexhaustible stock of anecdotes, and his curious and recondite erudition, and this was perhaps a reason for the preference he seemed to give me in his morning drives, during which I saw most of him alone. It is a great satisfaction to have been intimate with so celebrated and so benevolent a personage, and I hope that these recollections of his latter days may not be without their value in enabling those who were acquainted with Sir Walter in his most brilliant period to compare it with his declining moments during his residence in Italy."

Though some of the same things recur in the notes with which I am favoured by Mr Cheney, yet the reader will pardon this—and even be glad to compare the impressions of two such observers. Mr. Cheney says.—

"Delighted as I was to see Sir Walter Scott, I remarked with pain the ravages disease had made upon him. He was often abstracted, and it was only when warmed with his subject that the light blue eye shot from under the pent-house brow with the fire and spirit that recalled the author of *Waverley*.

"The 1st of May was appointed for a visit to Frascati, and it gave me great pleasure to have an opportunity of showing attention to Sir Walter without the appearance of obtrusiveness.

"The Villa Muth, which belonged to the late Cardinal of York, has, since his death, fallen into the hands of several proprietors; it yet retains, however, some relics of its former owner. There is a portrait of Charles I., a bust of the Cardinal, and another of the Chevalier de St George. But, above all, a picture of the *fiat* given on the promotion of the Cardinal in the Piazza de SS Apostoli (where the palace in which the Stuarts resided still bears the name of the Palazzo del Pretendente), occupied Sir Walter's attention. In this picture he discovered, or fancied he did so, the portraits of several of the distinguished followers of the exiled family. One he pointed out as resembling a picture he had seen of Cameron of Lochiel, whom he described as a dark, hard-featured man. He spoke with admiration of his devoted loyalty to the Stuarts. I also showed him an ivory head of Charles I., which had served as the top of Cardinal York's walking-stick. He did not fail to look at it with a lively interest.

"He admired the house, the position of which is of surpassing beauty, commanding an extensive view over the Campagna of Rome, but he deplored the fate of his favourite prince, observing that this was a poor substitute for all the splendid palaces to which they were heirs in England and Scotland. The place where we were suggested the topic of conversation. He was walking, he told me, over the field of Preston, and musing on the unlooked-for event of that day, when he was suddenly startled by the sound of the minute guns proclaiming the death of George IV. Lost in the thoughts of ephemeral glory suggested by the scene, he had forgotten, in the momentary success of his favourite hero, his subsequent misfortunes and defeat. The solemn sound, he added,

admonished him of the futility of all earthly triumphs, and reminded him that the whole race of the Stuarts had passed away, and was now followed to the grave by the first of the rival house of Brunswick who had reigned in the line of legitimate succession.

'During this visit Sir Walter was in excellent spirits, at dinner he talked and laughed, and Miss Scott assured me she had not seen him so gay since he left England. He put salt into his soup before tasting it, smiling as he did so. One of the company said that a friend of his used to declare that he should eat salt with a limb of Lot's wife. Sir Walter laughed, observing that he was of Mrs Siddons' mind, who, when dining with the Provost of Edinburgh, and being asked by her host if the beef were too salt, replied, in her emphatic tones of deep tragedy, which Sir Walter mimicked very comically,

"'Beef cannot be too salt for me, my lord.'

'Sir Walter, though he spoke no foreign language with facility, read Spanish as well as Italian. He expressed the most unbounded admiration for Cervantes, and said that the 'novelas' of that author had first inspired him with the ambition of excelling in fiction, and that, until disabled by illness, he had been a constant reader of them. He added that he had formerly made it a practice to read through the 'Orlando' of Boiardo and the 'Orlando' of Ariosto once every year.

'Of Dante he knew little, confessing he found him too obscure and difficult. I was sitting next him at dinner at Lady Coventry's, when this conversation took place. He added, with a smile, 'It is mortifying that Dante seemed to think nobody worth being sent to hell but his own Italians, whereas other people had every bit as great rogues in their families, whose misdeeds were suffered to pass with impunity. I said that *he* of all men had least right to make this complaint, as his own ancestor, Michael Scott, was consigned to a very tremendous punishment in the twentieth canto of the *Inferno*. His attention was roused, and I quoted the passage—

"'Quell' altro, che nei finchi e così poco,
Michele Scotto fu, che veramente
Delle magiche frode seppe il gioco'

'He seemed pleased, and alluded to the subject more than once in the course of the evening.

'One evening when I was with him, a person called to petition him in favour of the sufferers from the recent earthquake at Foligno. He instantly gave his name to the list with a very handsome subscription. This was by no means the only occasion on which I observed him ready and eager to answer the calls of charity.

"I accompanied Sir Walter and Miss Scott one morning to the Protestant burial-ground. The road to this spot runs by the side of the Tiber at the foot of Mount Aventine, and in our drive we passed several of the most interesting monuments of ancient Rome. The house of the Tribune Rienzi and the Temple of Vesta arrested his attention. This little circular temple, he said, struck him more than many of the finer ruins. Infirmary had checked his curiosity. 'I walk with pain,' he

said, 'and what we see whilst suffering makes little impression on us, it is for this reason that much of what I saw at Naples, and which I should have enjoyed ten years ago, I have already forgotten' The Protestant burying-ground lies near the Porta S. Paolo, at the foot of the noble pyramid of Caius Cestus. Miss Scott was anxious to see the grave of her friend, Lady Charlotte Stopford. Sir Walter was unable to walk, and while my brother attended Miss Scott to the spot, I remained in the carriage with him. 'I regret,' he said, 'that I cannot go. It would have been a satisfaction to me to have seen the place where they have laid her. She is the child of a Buccleuch, he, you know, is my chief, and all that comes from that house is dear to me.' He looked on the ground and sighed, and for a moment there was a silence between us.

"We spoke of politics, and of the reform in Parliament, which at that time was pending. I asked his opinion of it; he said he was no enemy to reform—'If the machine does not work well, it must be mended, but it should be by the best workmen ye have'.

"He regretted not having been at Holland House as he passed through London. 'Lord Holland,' he said, 'is the most agreeable man I ever knew, in criticism, in poetry, he beats those whose whole study they have been. No man in England has a more thorough knowledge of English authors, and he expresses himself so well, that his language illustrates and adorns his thoughts, as light streaming through coloured glass heightens the brilliancy of the objects it falls upon'.

"On the 4th of May he accepted a dinner at our house, and it gave my brother and myself unfeigned satisfaction to have again the pleasure of entertaining him. We collected a party to meet him, and amongst others I invited Don Luigi Santa Croce, one of his most ardent admirers, who had long desired an introduction. He is a man of much ability, and has played his part in the political changes of his country. When I presented him to Sir Walter, he bade me tell him, for he speaks no English, how long and how earnestly he had desired to see him, though he had hardly dared to hope it. 'Tell him,' he added, with warmth, 'that in disappointment, in sorrow, and in sickness, his works have been my chief comfort, and while living amongst his imaginary personages, I have succeeded for a moment in forgetting the vexations of blighted hopes, and have found relief in public and private distress.' The Marchesa Lough, the beautiful sister of Don Michele Gaetani, whom I also presented to him this evening, begged me to thank him, in her name, for some of the most agreeable moments of her life. 'She had had,' she said, 'though young, her share of sorrows, and in his works she had found not only amusement, but lessons of patience and resignation, which she hoped had not been lost upon her.' To all these flattering compliments, as well as to the thousand others that were daily showered upon him, Sir Walter replied with unfeigned humility, expressing himself pleased and obliged by the good opinion entertained of him, and delighting his admirers with the good-humour and urbanity with which he received them. Don Luigi talked of the plots of some of the novels, and earnestly remonstrated against the fate of Clara Mowbray, in *St. Ronan's Well*. 'I am much obliged to the gentleman for the interest he takes in her,' said Sir Walter, 'but I could not save her, poor thing—it

is against the rules—she had the bee in her bonnet’ Don Luigi still insisted Sir Walter replied, ‘No, but of all the murders that I have committed in that way, and few men have been guilty of more, there is none that went so much to my heart as the poor Bride of Lammermoor, but it could not be helped—it is all true’

“Sir Walter always showed much curiosity about the Constable Bourbon I said that a suit of armour belonging to him was preserved in the Vatican He eagerly asked after the form and construction, and inquired if he wore it on the day of the capture of Rome That event had greatly struck his imagination He told me he had always had an idea of weaving it into the story of a romance, and of introducing the traitor Constable as an actor Caesar Borgia was also a character whose vices and whole career appeared to him singularly romantic Having heard him say this, I begged Don Michele Gaetani, whose ancestors had been dispossessed of their rich fiefs by that ambitious upstart, to show Sir Walter a sword, now in the possession of his family, which had once belonged to Borgia The blade, which is very long and broad, is richly ornamented, and the arms of the Borgias are inlaid upon it, bearing the favourite motto of that tremendous personage ‘Aut Caesar, aut nihil’ Sir Walter examined it with attention, commenting on the character of Borgia, and congratulating Don Michele on the possession of a relic doubly interesting in his hands

“I continued a constant visitor at his house whilst he remained in Rome, and I also occasionally dined in his company, and took every opportunity of conversing with him I observed, with extreme pleasure, that he accepted willingly from me those trifling attentions which his infirmities required, and which all would have been delighted to offer I found him always willing to converse on any topic He spoke of his own works and of himself without reserve, never, however, introducing the subject nor dwelling upon it His conversation had neither affectation nor restraint, and he was totally free from the morbid egotism of some men of genius What surprised me most, and in one, too, who had so long been the object of universal admiration, was the unaffected humility with which he spoke of his own merits, and the sort of surprise with which he surveyed his own success That this was a real feeling none could doubt The natural simplicity of his manner must have convinced the most incredulous He was courteous and obliging to all, and towards women there was a dignified simplicity in his manner that was singularly pleasing He would not allow even his infirmities to exempt him from the little courtesies of society He always endeavoured to rise to address those who approached him, and once when my brother and myself accompanied him in his drive, it was not without difficulty that we could prevail on him not to seat himself with his back to the horses.

“I asked him if he meant to be presented at the Vatican, as I knew that his arrival had been spoken of, and that the Pope had expressed an interest about him He said he respected the Pope as the most ancient sovereign in Europe, and should have great pleasure in paying his respects to him, did his state of health permit it We talked of the ceremonies of the Church He had been much struck with the benedic-

tion from the balcony of St Peter's I advised him to wait to see the procession of the Corpus Domini, and to hear the Pope

"Saying the high, high mass,
All on St Peter's day'

"He smiled, and said those things were more poetical in description than in reality, and that it was all the better for him not to have seen it before he wrote about it, that any attempt to make such scenes more exact injured the effect without conveying a clearer image to the mind of the reader—as the Utopian scenes and manners of Mrs Radcliffe's novels captivated the imagination more than the most laboured descriptions or the greatest historical accuracy

"The morning after our arrival at Bracciano, when I left my room, I found Sir Walter already dressed, and seated in the deep recess of a window which commands an extensive view over the lake and surrounding country. He speculated on the lives of the turbulent lords of this ancient fortress, and listened with interest to such details as I could give him of their history. He drew a striking picture of the contrast between the calm and placid scene before us, and the hurry, din, and tumult of other days

"Insensibly we strayed into more modern times. I never saw him more animated and agreeable. He was exactly what I could imagine him to have been in his best moments. Indeed, I have several times heard him complain that his disease sometimes confused and bewildered his senses, while at others he was left with little remains of illness, except a consciousness of his state of infirmity. He talked of his Northern journey, of Manzoni, for whom he expressed a great admiration, of Lord Byron, and lastly of himself. Of Lord Byron he spoke with admiration and regard, calling him always 'poor Byron.' He considered him, he said, the only poet we have had since Dryden, of transcendent talents, and possessing more amiable qualities than the world in general gave him credit for

"In reply to my question if he had never seriously thought of complying with the advice so often given him to write a tragedy, he answered, 'Often, but the difficulty deterred me—my turn was not dramatic.' Some of the mottoes, I urged, prefixed to the chapters of his novels, and subscribed 'old play,' were eminently in the taste of the old dramatists, and seemed to ensure success. 'Nothing so easy,' he replied, 'when you are full of an author, as to write a few lines in his taste and style, the difficulty is to keep it up—besides,' he added, 'the greatest success would be but a spiritless imitation, or, at best, what the Italians call a *centone* from Shakespeare. No author has ever had so much cause to be grateful to the public as I have. All I have written has been received with indulgence'

"He said he was the more grateful for the flattering reception he had met with in Italy, as he had not always treated the Catholic religion with respect. I observed, that though he had exposed the hypocrites of all sects, no religion had any cause to complain of him, as he had rendered them all interesting by turns. Jews, Catholics, and Puritans had all their saints and martyrs in his works. He was much pleased with this,

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"He spoke of Goethe with regret; he had been in correspondence with him before his death, and had purposed visiting him at Weimar in re- turning to England. I told him I had been to see Goethe the year before, and that I had found him well, and though very old, in the perfect possession of all his faculties. 'Of all his faculties,' he replied, 'it is much better to die than to survive them, and better still to die than live in the apprehension of it; but the worst of all,' he added thoughtfully, 'would have been to have survived their partial loss, and yet to be conscious of his state.' He did not seem to be, however, a great admirer of some of Goethe's works. Much of his popularity, he observed, was owing to pieces which, in his latter moments, he must have recalled. He spoke with much feeling. I answered that he must derive great consolation in the reflection that his own popularity was owing to no such cause. He remained silent for a moment, with his eyes fixed on the ground, when he raised them, as he shook me by the hand, I perceived the light blue eye sparkling with unusual moisture. He added, 'I am drawing near to the close of my career; I am fast shuffling off the stage. I have been perhaps the most voluminous author of the day; and it is a comfort to me to think that I have tried to unsettle no man's faith, to corrupt no man's principle, and that I have written nothing which on my death-bed, I should wish blotted.' I made no reply, and while we were yet silent, Don Michele Gaetani joined us, and we walked through the vast hall into the court of the castle, where our friends were expecting us.

"After breakfast Sir Walter returned to Rome. The following day he purposed setting out on his northern journey. It was Friday. I was anxious that he should prolong his stay in Rome; and reminding him of his superstition, I told him he ought not to set out on the unlucky day. He answered, laughing, 'Superstition is very picturesque; and I make it at times stand me in great stead; but I never allow it to interfere with interest or convenience.'

"As I helped him down the steep court to his carriage, he said, as he stepped with pain and difficulty, 'This is a sore change with me. Time was when I would hunt and shoot with the best of them, and thought it but a poor day's sport when I was not on foot from ten to twelve hours; but we must be patient.'

"I handed him into his carriage, and in taking leave of me, he pressed me, with eager hospitality, to visit him at Abbotsford. The door closed upon him, and I stood for some moments watching the carriage till it was out of sight, as it wound through the portal of the Castle of Bracciano.

"Next day, Friday, May 11, Sir Walter left Rome.

"During his stay there he had received every mark of attention and respect from the Italians, who in dread of intruding on an invalid. The only by their delicacy and their dread of intruding on an invalid. The use of villas, libraries, and museums was pressed upon him. His fame, and even his works, are familiar to all classes—the stalls are filled with translations of his novels, in the cheapest forms, and some of the most popular plays and operas have been founded upon them. Some time after he left Italy, when I was travelling in the mountains of Tuscany,

it has more than once occurred to me to be stopped in little villages, hardly accessible to carriages, by an eager admirer of Sir Walter, to inquire after the health of my illustrious countryman."

The last jotting of Sir Walter's Diary—perhaps the last specimen of his handwriting—records his starting from Naples on the 16th of April. After the 11th of May the story can hardly be told too briefly.

The irritation of impatience, which had for a moment been suspended by the aspect and society of Rome, returned the moment he found himself on the road, and seemed to increased hourly. His companions could with difficulty prevail on him to see even the Falls of Terni, or the Church of Santa Croce at Florence. On the 17th, a cold and dreary day, they passed the Apennines, and dined on the top of the mountains. The snow and the pines recalled Scotland, and he expressed pleasure at the sight of them. That night they reached Bologna, but he would see none of the interesting objects there—and next day, hurrying in like manner through Ferrara, he proceeded as far as Monselice. On the 19th he arrived at Venice, and he remained there till the 23rd, but showed no curiosity about anything except the Bridge of Sighs and the adjoining dungeons—down into which he would scramble, though the exertion was exceedingly painful to him. On the other historical features of that place—one so sure in other days to have inexhaustible attractions for him—he would not even look, and it was the same with all that he came within reach of—even with the fondly anticipated chapel at Inspruck—as they proceeded through the Tyrol, and so onwards, by Munich, Ulm, and Heidelberg, to Frankfurt. Here (June 5) he entered a bookseller's shop; and the people seeing an English party, brought out among the first things a lithographed print of Abbotsford. He said, "I know that already, sir," and hastened back to the inn without being recognized. Though in some parts of the journey they had very severe weather, he repeatedly wished to travel all the night as well as all the day, and the symptoms of an approaching fit were so obvious, that he was more than once bled, ere they reached Mayence, by the hand of his affectionate domestic.

At this town they embarked on the 8th June in the Rhine steamboat, and while they descended the famous river through its most picturesque region, he seemed to enjoy, though he said nothing, the perhaps unrivalled scenery it presented to him. His eye was fixed on the successive crags and castles and ruined monasteries, each of which had been celebrated in some German ballad familiar to his ear, and all of them blended in the immortal panorama of *Childe Harold*. But so soon as he resumed his carriage at Cologne, and nothing but flat shores, and here and there a grove of poplars and a village spire were offered to the vision, the weight of misery sunk down again upon him. It was near Nimeguen, on the evening of the 9th, that he sustained another serious attack of apoplexy, combined with paralysis. Nicholson's lancet restored, after the lapse of some minutes, the signs of animation, but this was the crowning blow. Next day he insisted on resuming his journey, and on the 11th was lifted from the carriage into a steamboat at Rotterdam.

He reached London about six o'clock on the evening of Wednesday,

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the 13th of June. Owing to the unexpected rapidity of the journey his eldest daughter had had no notice when to expect him, and fearful of finding her out of town, or unprepared to receive him and his attendants under her roof, Charles Scott drove to the St James's Hotel in Jermyn Street, and established his quarters there before he set out in quest of his sister and myself. When we reached the hotel he recognized us with many marks of tenderness, but signified that he was totally exhausted, so no attempt was made to remove him farther, and he was put to bed immediately. Dr Ferguson saw him the same night, and during the next Henry Halford and Dr Holland saw him also, and next day Sir three weeks the two former visited him daily, while Ferguson was scarcely absent from his pillow. The Major, was soon on the spot. To his children, all assembled once more about him, he repeatedly gave his blessing in a very solemn manner, as if expecting immediate death, but he was never in a condition for conversation, and sunk either into sleep or delirious stupor upon the slightest effort.

Mrs Thomas Scott came to town as soon as she heard of his arrival, and remained to help us. She was more than once recognized and thanked. Mr Cadell, too, arrived from Edinburgh to render any assistance in his power. I think Sir Walter saw no other of his friends except Mr John Richardson, and him only once. As usual, he woke up at the sound of a familiar voice, and made an attempt to put forth his hand, but it dropped powerless, and he said, with a smile, "Excuse my hand." Richardson made a struggle to suppress his emotion, and, after a moment, got out something about Abbotsford and the woods, which he had happened to see shortly before. The eye brightened, and he said, "How does Kirklands get on?" Mr Richardson had lately purchased the estate so called on the Teviot, and Sir Walter had left him busied with plans of building. His friend told him that his new house was begun, and that the Marquis of Lothian had very kindly lent him one of his own, meantime, in its vicinity. "Ay, Lord Lothian is a good man," said Sir Walter, "he is a man from whom one may receive a favour, and that's saying a good deal for any man in these days." The stupor then sank back upon him, and Richardson never heard his voice again. This state of things continued till the beginning of July.

During these melancholy weeks great interest and sympathy were manifested. Allan Cunningham mentions that, walking home late one night, he found several working men standing together at the corner of Jermyn Street, and one of them asked him, as if there was but one death-bed in London, "Do you know, sir, if this is the street where he is lying?" The inquiries both at the hotel and at my house were incessant, and I think there was hardly a member of the Royal Family who did not send every day. The newspapers teemed with paragraphs about Sir Walter, and one of these, it appears, threw out a suggestion that his travels had exhausted his pecuniary resources, and that if he were capable of reflection at all, cares of that sort might probably harass his pillow. This paragraph came from a very ill-informed, but, I daresay, a well-meaning quarter. It caught the attention of some members of the then Government, and, in consequence, I received a private communication to the effect that if the case were as stated, Sir Walter's family had only

to say what sum would relieve him from embarrassment, and it would be immediately advanced by the Treasury. The then Paymaster of the Forces, Lord John Russell, had the delicacy to convey this message through a lady with whose friendship he knew us to be honoured. We expressed our grateful sense of his politeness, and of the liberality of the Government, and I now beg leave to do so once more, but his Lordship was of course informed that Sir Walter Scott was not situated as the journalist had represented.

Dr Ferguson's memorandum on Jermyn Street will be acceptable to the reader. He says —

"When I saw Sir Walter he was lying in the second-floor back room of the St James's Hotel in Jermyn Street, in a state of stupor, from which, however, he could be roused for a moment by being addressed, and then he recognized those about him, but immediately relapsed. I think I never saw anything more magnificent than the symmetry of his colossal bust, as he lay on the pillow with his chest and neck exposed. During the time he was in Jermyn Street he was calm but never collected, and in general either in absolute stupor or in a waking dream. He never seemed to know where he was, but imagined himself to be still in the steambot. The rattling of carriages and the noises of the street sometimes disturbed this illusion, and then he fancied himself at the polling booth of Jedburgh, where he had been insulted and stoned.

"During the whole of this period of apparent helplessness, the great features of his character could not be mistaken. He always exhibited great self-possession, and acted his part with wonderful power whenever visited, though he relapsed the next moment into the stupor from which strange voices had roused him. A gentleman stumbled over a chair in his dark room, he immediately started up, and though unconscious that it was a friend, expressed as much concern and feeling as if he had never been labouring under the irritability of disease. It was impossible even for those who most constantly saw and waited on him in his then deplorable condition, to relax from the habitual deference which he had always inspired. He expressed his will as determinedly as ever, and enforced it with the same apt and good-natured irony as he was wont to use.

"At length his constant yearning to return to Abbotsford induced his physicians to consent to his removal, and the moment this was notified to him it seemed to infuse new vigour into his frame. It was on a calm, clear afternoon of the 7th July, that every preparation was made for his embarkation on board the steambot. He was placed on a chair by his faithful servant Nicolson, half-dressed, and loosely wrapped in a quilted dressing-gown. He requested Lockhart and myself to wheel him towards the light of the open window, and we both remarked the vigorous lustre of his eye. He sat there silently gazing on space for more than half an hour, apparently wholly occupied with his own thoughts, and having no distinct perception of where he was or how he came there. He suffered himself to be lifted into his carriage, which was surrounded by a crowd, among whom were many gentlemen on horseback, who had loitered about to gaze on the scene.

"His children were deeply affected, and Mrs Lockhart trembled from head to foot and wept bitterly. Thus surrounded by those nearest to

him, he alone was unconscious of the cause or the depth of their grief, and while yet alive seemed to be carried to his grave."

On this his last journey Sir Walter was attended by his two daughters, Mr Cadell, and myself—and also by Dr James Watson, who (it being impossible for Dr. Ferguson to leave town at that moment) kindly undertook to see him safe at Abbotsford. We embarked in the James Watt steamboat, the master of which (Captain John Jamieson), as well as the agent of the proprietors, made every arrangement in their power for the convenience of the invalid. The captain gave up for Sir Walter's use his own private cabin, which was a separate erection, a sort of cottage, on the deck, and he seemed unconscious, after laid in bed there, that any new removal had occurred. On arriving at Newhaven, late on the 9th, we found careful preparations made for his landing by the manager of the Shipping Company (Mr Hamilton); and Sir Walter, prostrate in his carriage, was slung on shore, and conveyed from thence to Douglas's hotel, in St Andrew's Square, in the same complete apparent unconsciousness. Mrs Douglas had in former days been the Duke of Buccleuch's house-keeper at Bowhill, and she and her husband had also made the most suitable provision. At a very early hour on the morning of Wednesday, the 11th, we again placed him in his carriage, and he lay in the same torpid state during the first two stages on the road to Tweedside. But as we descended the vale of the Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognizing the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—"Gala Water, surely—Buckholm—Torwoodlee." As we rounded the hill at Ladhope, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited, and when turning himself on the couch his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight. The river being in flood, we had to go round a few miles by Melrose bridge, and during the time this occupied, his woods and house being within prospect, it required occasionally both Dr Watson's strength and mine, in addition to Nicolson's, to keep him in the carriage. After passing the bridge the road for a couple of miles loses sight of Abbotsford, and he relapsed into his stupor, but on gaining the bank immediately above it his excitement became again ungovernable.

Mr Laidlaw was waiting at the porch, and assisted us in lifting him into the dining-room, where his bed had been prepared. He sat bewildered for a few moments, and then, resting his eye on Laidlaw, said, "Ha! Willie Laidlaw! O man, how often have I thought of you!" By this time his dogs had assembled about his chair—they began to fawn upon him and lick his hands, and he alternately sobbed and smiled over them, until sleep oppressed him.

Dr Watson having consulted on all things with Mr Clarkson and his father, resigned the patient to them, and returned to London. None of them could have any hope but that of soothing irritation. Recovery was no longer to be thought of, but there might be *Euthanasia*.

And yet something like a ray of hope did break in upon us next morning. Sir Walter awoke perfectly conscious where he was, and expressed an ardent wish to be carried out into his garden. We procured a Bath chair from Huntly Burn, and Laidlaw and I wheeled him out

before his door, and up and down for some time on the turf, and among the rose-beds then in full bloom. The grandchildren admired the new vehicle, and would be helping in their way to push it about. He sat in silence, smiling placidly on them and the dogs their companions, and now and then admiring the house, the screen of the garden, and the flowers and trees. By-and-bye he conversed a little, very composedly, with us—said he was happy to be at home—that he felt better than he had ever done since he left it, and would perhaps disappoint the doctors after all.

He then desired to be wheeled through his rooms, and we moved him leisurely for an hour or more up and down the hall and the great library. "I have seen much," he kept saying, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more!" He was gentle as an infant, and allowed himself to be put to bed again, the moment we told him that we thought he had had enough for one day.

Next morning he was still better. After again enjoying the Bath chair for perhaps a couple of hours out of doors, he desired to be drawn into the library, and placed by the central window, that he might look down upon the Tweed. Here he expressed a wish that I should read to him, and when I asked from what book, he said, "Need you ask? There is but one." I chose the 14th chapter of St John's Gospel, he listened with mild devotion, and said when I had done, "Well, this is a great comfort—I have followed you distinctly, and I feel as if I were yet to be myself again." In this placid frame he was again put to bed, and had many hours of soft slumber.

On the third day Mr Landlaw and I again wheeled him about the small piece of lawn and shrubbery in front of the house for some time, and the weather being delightful, and all the richness of summer around him, he seemed to taste fully the balmy influences of nature. The sun getting very strong, we halted the chair in a shady corner, just within the verge of his verdant arcade around the court-wall, and breathing the coolness of the spot, he said, "Read me some amusing thing—read me a bit of Crabbe." I brought out the first volume of his old favourite that I could lay hand on, and turned to what I remembered as one of his most favourite passages in it—the description of the arrival of the Players in the Borough. He listened with great interest, and also, as I soon perceived, with great curiosity. Every now and then he exclaimed, "Capital—excellent—very good—Crabbe has lost nothing"—and we were too well satisfied that he considered himself as hearing a new production, when, chuckling over one couplet, he said, "Better and better, but how will poor Terry endure these cuts?" I went on with the poet's terrible sarcasms upon the theatrical life, and he listened eagerly, muttering, "Honest Dan!"—"Dan won't like this." At length I reached those lines,

"Sad happy race! soon raised and soon depressed,
Your days all passed in jeopardy and jest
Poor without prudence, with afflictions vain,
Not warned by misery, nor enriched by gain."

"Shut the book," said Sir Walter, "I can't stand more of this—it will touch Terry to the very quick."

On the morning of Sunday the 15th he was again taken out into the little *pleasaunce*, and got as far as his favourite terrace-walk between the garden and the river, from which he seemed to survey the valley and the hills with much satisfaction. On re-entering the house, he desired me to read to him from the New Testament, and after that he again called for a little of Crabbe, but whatever I selected from that poet seemed to be listened to as if it made part of some new volume published while he was in Italy. He attended with this sense of novelty even to the tale of Phœbe Dawson, which not many months before he could have repeated every line of, and which I chose for one of these readings, because, as is known to every one, it had formed the last solace of Mr Fox's death-bed. On the contrary, his recollection of whatever I read from the Bible appeared to be lively, and in the afternoon when we made his grandson, a child of six years, repeat some of Dr Watts's hymns by his chair, he seemed also to remember them perfectly. That evening he heard the Church Service, and when I was about to close the book, said, "Why do you omit the Visitation for the Sick?"—which I added accordingly.

On Monday he remained in bed and seemed extremely feeble, but after breakfast on Tuesday the 17th he appeared revived somewhat, and was again wheeled about on the turf. Presently he fell asleep in his chair, and after dozing for perhaps half an hour, started awake, and shaking the plaids we had put about him from off his shoulders, said, "This is sad idleness. I shall forget what I have been thinking of if I don't set it down now. Take me into my own room, and fetch the keys of my desk." He repeated this so earnestly that we could not refuse; his daughters went into his study, opened his writing-desk, and laid paper and pens in the usual order, and I then moved him through the hall and into the spot where he had always been accustomed to work. When the chair was placed at the desk, and he found himself in the old position, he smiled and thanked us, and said, "Now give me my pen and leave me for a little to myself." Sophia put the pen into his hand, and he endeavoured to close his fingers upon it, but they refused their office—it dropped on the paper. He sank back among his pillows, silent tears rolling down his cheeks, but composing himself by-and-bye, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again. Laidlaw met us at the porch, and took his turn of the chair. Sir Walter, after a little while, again dropt into slumber. When he was awaking, Laidlaw said to me, "Sir Walter has had a little repose." "No, Willie," said he, "no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave." The tears again rushed from his eyes. "Friends," said he, "don't let me expose myself—get me to bed—that's the only place."*

With this scene ended our glimpse of daylight. Sir Walter never, I think, left his room afterwards, and hardly his bed, except for an hour or two in the middle of the day, and after another week he was unable even for this. During a few days he was in a state of painful irritation and I saw realized all that he had himself prefigured in his description of the meeting between Crystal Croftangry and his paralytic friend.

* As this is the last time I name Mr Laidlaw, I may as well mention that this most excellent and amiable man became factor on the estate of Sir Charles Lockhart Ross, Bart., of Balnagowan, in Rosshire.

Dr Ross came out from Edinburgh, bringing with him his wife, one of the dearest *nieces* of the Clerk's Table Sir Walter with some difficulty recognized the Doctor—but on hearing Mrs Ross's voice, exclaimed at once, "Isn't that Kate Hume?" These kind friends remained for two or three days with us Clarkson's lancet was pronounced necessary, and the relief it afforded was, I am happy to say, very effectual

After this he declined daily, but still there was great strength to be wasted, and the process was long He seemed, however, to suffer no bodily pain, and his mind, though hopelessly obscured, appeared, when there was any symptom of consciousness, to be dwelling, with rare exceptions, on serious and solemn things, the accent of the voice grave, sometimes awful, but never querulous, and very seldom indicative of any angry or resentful thoughts Now and then he imagined himself to be administering justice as Sheriff, and once or twice he seemed to be ordering Tom Purdie about trees A few times also, I am sorry to say, we could perceive that his fancy was at Jedburgh, and *Burk Sir Walter* escaped him in a melancholy tone But commonly whatever we could follow him in was a fragment of the Bible (especially the Prophecies of Isaiah and the Book of Job), or some petition in the Litany, or a verse of some psalm (in the old Scotch metrical version), or of some of the magnificent hymns of the Romish ritual, in which he had always delighted, but which probably hung on his memory now in connection with the church services he had attended while in Italy We very often heard distinctly the cadence of the *Dies Iræ*, and I think the very last stanza that we could make out was the first of a still greater favourite.

"Stabat Mater dolorosa,
Juxta crucem lacrymosa,
Dum pendebat Filius"

All this time he continued to recognize his daughters, Laidlaw, and myself, whenever we spoke to him, and received every attention with a most touching thankfulness Mr Clarkson, too, was always saluted with the old courtesy, though the cloud opened but a moment for him to do so Most truly might it be said that the gentleman survived the genius

After two or three weeks had passed in this way, I was obliged to leave Sir Walter for a single day, and go into Edinburgh to transact business, on his account, with Mr Henry Cockburn (now Lord Cockburn), then Solicitor-General for Scotland The Scotch Reform Bill threw a great burden of new duties and responsibilities upon the Sheriffs, and Scott's Sheriff-Substitute, the Laird of Raeburn, not having been regularly educated for the law, found himself incompetent to encounter these novelties, especially as regarded the registration of voters, and other details connected with the recent enlargement of the electoral franchise Under such circumstances, as no one but the Sheriff could appoint another Substitute, it became necessary for Sir Walter's family to communicate the state he was in in a formal manner to the law officers of the Crown, and the Lord Advocate (Mr Jeffrey), in consequence, introduced and carried through Parliament a short Bill (2 and 3 William IV. cap 101), authorizing the Government to appoint a new

Sheriff of Selkirkshire, "during the incapacity or non-resignation of Sir Walter Scott." It was on this Bill that the Solicitor-General had expressed a wish to converse with me, but there was little to be said, as the temporary nature of the new appointment gave no occasion for any pecuniary question, and, if that had been otherwise, the circumstances of the case would have rendered Sir Walter's family entirely indifferent upon such a subject. There can be no doubt, that if he had recovered in so far as to be capable of executing a resignation, the Government would have considered it just to reward thirty-two years' faithful services by a retired allowance equivalent to his salary,—and as little that the Government would have had sincere satisfaction in settling that matter in the shape most acceptable to himself. And perhaps (though I feel that it is scarcely worth while) I may as well here express my regret that a statement highly unjust and injurious should have found its way into the pages of some of Sir Walter's preceding biographers. These writers have thought fit to insinuate that there was a want of courtesy and respect on the part of the Lord Advocate, and the other official persons connected with this arrangement. On the contrary, nothing could be more handsome and delicate than the whole of their conduct in it, Mr Cockburn could not have entered into the case with greater feeling and tenderness had it concerned a brother of his own, and when Mr Jeffrey introduced his Bill in the House of Commons, he used language so graceful and touching, that both Sir Robert Peel and Mr Croker went across the House to thank him cordially for it.

Perceiving, towards the close of August, that the end was near, and thinking it very likely that Abbotsford might soon undergo many changes, and myself, at all events, never see it again, I felt a desire to have some image preserved of the interior apartments as occupied by their founder, and invited from Edinburgh for that purpose Sir Walter's dear friend, William Allan—whose presence, I well knew, would even under the circumstances of that time be nowise troublesome to any of the family, but the contrary in all respects. Mr. Allan willingly complied, and executed a series of beautiful drawings. He also shared our watchings, and witnessed all but the last moments. Sir Walter's cousins, the ladies of Ashiestiel, came down frequently, for a day or two at a time, and did whatever sisterly affections could prompt, both for the sufferer and his daughters. Miss Barbara Scott (daughter of his uncle Thomas), and Mrs Scott of Harden did the like.

As I was dressing on the morning of Monday, the 17th of September, Nicolson came into my room, and told me that his master had awoke in a state of composure and consciousness, and wished to see me immediately. I found him entirely himself, though in the last extreme of feebleness. His eye was clear and calm—every trace of the wild fire of delirium extinguished. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man—be virtuous—be religious—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." He paused, and I said, "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "don't disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night—God bless you all." With this he sank into a very tranquil sleep, and, indeed, he scarcely afterwards gave any sign of consciousness,

except for an instant on the arrival of his sons. They, on learning that the scene was about to close, obtained anew leave of absence from their posts, and both reached Abbotsford on the 19th. About half-past one p.m., on the 21st of September, Sir Walter breathed his last, in the presence of all his children. It was a beautiful day—so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes.

No sculptor ever modelled a more majestic image of repose :—

Καίτο μέγας μεγαλωσι, λελασμένος ζωουσινάων

Almost every newspaper that announced this event in Scotland, and many in England, had the signs of mourning usual on the demise of a king. With hardly an exception, the voice was that of universal, unmixed grief and veneration.

It was considered due to Sir Walter's physicians, and to the public, that the nature of his malady should be distinctly ascertained. The result was, that there appeared the traces of a very slight mollification in one part of the substance of the brain.

His funeral was conducted in an unostentatious manner, but the attendance was very great. Few of his old friends then in Scotland were absent, and many, both friends and strangers, came from a great distance. His old domestics and foresters made it their petition that no hiring hand might assist in carrying his remains. They themselves bore the coffin to the hearse, and from the hearse to the grave. The pall-bearers were his sons, his son-in-law, and his little grandson, his cousins, Charles Scott of Nesbitt, James Scott of Jedburgh (sons to his uncle Thomas), William Scott of Raeburn, Robert Ruthesford, Clerk to the Signet, Colonel (now Sir James) Russell of Ashiestiel, William Keith (brother to Sir Alexander Keith of Ravelstone), and the chief of his family, Hugh Scott of Harden, now Lord Polwarth.

When the company were assembled, according to the usual Scotch fashion, prayers were offered up by the Very Reverend Dr Burd, Principal of the University of Edinburgh, and by the Reverend Dr David Dickson, minister of St Cuthbert's, who both expatiated in a very striking manner on the virtuous example of the deceased.

The courtyard and all the precincts of Abbotsford were crowded with uncovered spectators as the procession was arranged, and as it advanced through Darnick and Melrose, and the adjacent villages, the whole population appeared at their doors in like manner, almost all in black. The train of carriages extended, I understand, over more than a mile; the Yeomanry followed in great numbers on horseback, and it was late in the day ere we reached Dryburgh. Some accident, it was observed, had caused the hearse to halt for several minutes on the summit of the hill at Bemerside, exactly where a prospect of remarkable richness opens, and where Sir Walter had always been accustomed to rein up his horse. The day was dark and lowering, and the wind high.

The wide enclosure at the Abbey of Dryburgh was thronged with old and young, and when the coffin was taken from the hearse, and again

laid on the shoulders of the afflicted serving-men, one deep sob burst from a thousand lips. Mr Archdeacon Williams read the Burial Service of the Church of England, and thus, about half-past five o'clock in the evening of Wednesday, the 26th of September, 1832, the remains of Sir Walter Scott were laid by the side of his wife in the sepulchre of his ancestors—"in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile body that it may be like unto His glorious body, according to the mighty working, whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself."*

CONCLUSION

We read in Solomon, "The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy;" and a wise poet of our own time thus beautifully expands the saying —

"Why should we faint and fear to live alone,
Since all alone, so Heaven has willed, we die,
Nor even the tenderest heart, and next our own,
Knows half the reasons why we smile and sigh?"†

Such considerations have always induced me to regard with small respect any attempt to delineate fully and exactly any human being's character. I distrust, even in very humble cases, our capacity for judging our neighbour fairly, and I cannot but pity the presumption that must swell in the heart and brain of any ordinary brother of the race, when he dares to pronounce, *ex cathedra*, on the whole structure and complexion of a great mind, from the comparatively narrow and scanty materials which can by possibility have been placed before him. Nor is the difficulty to my view lessened,—perhaps it is rather increased, when the great man is a great artist. It is true that many of the feelings common to our nature can only be expressed adequately, and that some of the finest of them can only be expressed at all, in the language of art, and more especially in the language of poetry. But it is equally true, that high and sane art never attempts to express that for which the artist does not claim and expect general sympathy, and however much of what we had thought to be our own secrets he ventures to give shape to, it becomes, I can never help believing, modest understandings to rest convinced that there remained a world of deeper mysteries to which the dignity of genius would refuse any utterance.

I have therefore endeavoured to lay before the reader those parts of Sir Walter's character to which we have access, as they were indicated in his sayings and doings through the long series of his years—making use, whenever it was possible, of his own letters and diaries rather than of any other materials, but refrained from obtruding almost anything of comment. It was my wish to let the character develop itself, and conscious

* A monument formed from a solid block of Aberdeen granite, designed by Chintrey and executed by Allan Cunningham, covers Scott's tomb. It bears merely his name and date of death.—[EDITOR.]

† See Keble's Christian Year.

that I have wilfully withheld nothing that might assist the mature reader to arrive at just conclusions, I am by no means desirous of drawing out a detailed statement of my own. I am not going to "peep and botanize" upon his grave. But a few general observations will be forgiven, perhaps expected.

I believe that if the history of any one family in upper or middle life could be faithfully written, it might be as generally interesting, and as permanently useful, as that of any nation, however great and renowned. But literature has never produced any worthy book of this class, and probably it never will. The only lineages in which we can pretend to read personal character far back, with any distinctness, are those of kings and princes, and a few noble houses of the first eminence, and it hardly needed Swift's biting satire to satisfy the student of the past, that the very highest pedigrees are as uncertain as the very lowest. We flatter the reigning monarch, or his haughtier satellite, by tracing in their lineaments the mighty conqueror or profound legislator of a former century. But call up the dead, according to the Dean's incantation, and we might have the real ancestor in some chamberlain, confessor, or musician.

Scott delighted, perhaps above all other books, in such as approximate to the character of good family histories, as, for example, Godseioft's *House of Douglas and Angus*, and the *Memoire of the Somervilles*—which last is, as far as I know, the best of its class in any language, and his reprint of the trivial *Memorials of the Haliburtons*, to whose dust he is now gathered, was but one of a thousand indications of his anxiety to realize his own ancestry to his imagination. No testamentary deed, instrument of contract, or entry in a parish register seemed valueless to him, if it bore in any manner, however obscure or distant, on the personal history of any of his ascertainable predecessors. The chronicles of the race furnished the fireside talk to which he listened in infancy at Smailholm, and his first rhymes were those of Satchels. His physical infirmity was reconciled to him, even dignified, perhaps, by tracing it back to forefathers who acquired famousness in their own way, in spite of such disadvantages. These studies led by easy and inevitable links to those of the history of his province generally, and then of his native kingdom. The lamp of his zeal burnt on brighter and brighter amidst the dust of parchments, his love and pride vivified whatever he hung over in these dim records, and patient antiquarianism, long brooding and meditating, became gloriously transmuted into the winged spirit of national poetry.

Whatever he had in himself he would fain have made out a hereditary claim for. He often spoke both seriously and sportively on the subject. He had assembled about him in his "own great parlour," as he called it—the room in which he died—all the pictures of his ancestors that he could come by, and in his most genial evening mood he seemed never to weary of perusing them. The Cavalier of Kilbuckie, brave, faithful, learned, and romantic old "Beardie," a determined but melancholy countenance, was never surveyed without a repetition of the solitary Latin rhyme of his Vow. He had, of course, no portraits of the elder heroes of Harden to lecture upon, but a skilful hand had supplied the

same wall with a fanciful delineation of the rough wooing of "Meikle-mouthed Meg," and the only historical picture, properly so called, that he ever bespoke was to be taken (for it was never executed) from the Raid o' the Redswire, when

— "The Laird's Wat, that worthy man,
Brought in that surname weel beseen,

And

"The Rutherfords, with great renown,
Convoyer' the town o' Jedburgh ont."

The ardent but sagacious "goodman of Sandyknowe" hangs by the side of his father, "Bearded Wat," and often, when moralizing in his latter days over the doubtful conditions of his ultimate fortunes, Sir Walter would point to "Honest Robin," and say, "Blood will out — my building and planting was but his buying the hunter before he stocked his sheep-walk over again." "And yet," I once heard him say, glancing to the likeness of his own staid calculating father, "it is a wonder, too—for I have a thread of the attorney in me." And so no doubt he had, for the "elements" were mingled in him curiously as well as "gently."

An imagination such as his, concentrating its day-dreams on things of this order, soon shaped out a world of its own—to which it would fain accommodate the real one. The love of his country became indeed a passion, no knight ever tilted for his mistress more willingly than he would have bled and died, to preserve even the slightest surviving nothing of her antique pretensions for Scotland. But the Scotland of his affections had the clan Scott for her kernel. Next and almost equal to the throne was Buccleuch. Fancy rebuilt and most prodigally embellished the whole system of the social existence of the middle ages, in which the clansman (wherever there were clans) acknowledge practically no sovereign but his chief. The author of the "Lay" would rather have seen his heir carry the banner of Bellenen gallantly at a football match on Carterhagh, than he would have heard that the boy had attained the highest honours of the first university in Europe. His original pride was to be acknowledged member of one of the "honourable families" whose progenitors had been celebrated by Satchels for following this banner in blind obedience to the patriarchal leader, his first and last worldly ambition was to be himself the founder of a distinct branch, he desired to plant a lasting root, and dreamt not of personal fame, but of long-distant generations rejoicing in the name of "Scott of Abbotsford." By this idea all his reveries—all his aspirations—all his plans and efforts were over-shadowed and controlled. The great object and end only rose into clearer daylight, and swelled into more substantial dimensions, as public applause strengthened his confidence in his own powers and facilities, and when he had reached the summit of unrivalled honour, he clung to his first love with the faith of a Paladin. It is easy enough to smile at all this, many will not understand it, and some who do may pity it. But it was at least a different thing from the modern vulgar ambition of amassing a fortune and investing it in land. The lordliest vision of acres would have had little charm for him, unless they were situated on Etrick or Yarrow, or in

—"Pleasant Tivedale
Fast by the river Tweed"—

somewhere within the primeval territory of "the Rough Clan"

His worldly ambition was thus grafted on that ardent feeling for blood and kindred, which was the great redeeming element in the social life of what we call the middle ages, and—though no man estimated the solid advantages of modern existence more justly than he did, when restraining his fancy, he exercised his graver faculties on the comparison—it was the natural effect of the studies he devoted himself to and rose by, to indispose him for dwelling on the sober results of judgment and reason in all such matters. What a striking passage that is in one of his letters where he declines to write a biography of Queen Mary, "because his opinion was contrary to his feeling!" But he confesses the same of his Jacobitism, and yet how eagerly does he seem to have grasped at the shadow, however false and futile, under which he chose to see the means of reconciling his Jacobitism with loyalty to the reigning monarch who befriended him! We find him, over and over again, alluding to George IV as acquiring a title *de jure*, on the death of the poor Cardinal of York! Yet who could have known better that whatever rights the exiled males of the Stuart line ever possessed, must have remained entire with their female descendants?

The same resolution to give imagination her scope, and always in favour of antiquity, is the ruling principle and charm of all his best writings, and he indulged and embodied it so largely in his buildings at Abbotsford, that to have curtailed the exposition of his fond untiring enthusiasm on that score would have been like omitting the Prince in a cast of Hamlet. So also with all the details of his hospitable existence when he had fairly completed his "romance in stone and lime,"—every outline copied from some old baronial edifice in Scotland—every roof and window blazoned with clan bearings, or the lion rampant gules, or the heads of the ancient Stuart kings. He wished to revive the interior life of the castles he had emulated—their wide open joyous reception of all comers, but especially of kinsmen, allies, and neighbours—ballads and pibrochs to enliven flowing bowls and *quarries*—jolly hunting fields in which yeoman and gentleman might ride side by side—and mirthful dances, where no Sir Percy Shafton need blush to lead out the miller's daughter. In the brightest meridian of his genius and fame, this was his *beau idéal*. All the rest, however agreeable and flattering, was but "leather and prunella" to this. There was much kindness surely in such ambition—in spite of the apparent contradiction in terms, was there not really much humility about it?

To this ambition we owe the gigantic monuments of Scott's genius, and to the kindly feelings out of which his ambition grew, grew also his fatal connection with merchandise. The Ballantynes were his old school-fellows, and the reader has had means to judge whether, when once embarked in their concerns, he ever could have got out of them again, until inde calamity, at one blow, broke the meshes of his entanglement. I need not recur to that sad and complicated chapter. Nor, perhaps, need I offer any more speculations, by way of explaining, and reconciling

to his previous and subsequent history and demeanour, either the mystery in which he had chosen to wrap his commercial connexions from his most intimate friends, or the portentous carelessness with which he abandoned these matters to the direction of negligent and inefficient colleagues. And yet I ought, I rather think, to have suggested to certain classes of my readers, at a much earlier stage, that no man can be called either to the English or the Scottish Bar who is known to have any direct interest in any commercial undertaking of any sort, and that the body of feelings or prejudices in which this regulation originated—(for though there might be sound reason for it besides, such undoubtedly was the main source)—prevailed in Scotland in Sir Walter's youth, to an extent of which the present generation may not easily form an adequate notion. In the minds of the "*northern noblesse de la robe*," as they are styled in *Redgauntlet*, such feelings had wide and potent authority, insomuch that I can understand perfectly how Scott, even after he ceased to practise at the Bar, being still a Sheriff and a member of the Faculty of Advocates, should have shrunk very sensitively from the idea of having his alliance with a trading firm revealed among his comrades of the gown. And, moreover, the practice of mystery is, perhaps, of all practices the one most likely to grow into a habit, secret breeds secret, and I ascribe, after all, the long silence about *Waverley* to the matured influence of this habit, at least as much as to any of the motives which the author has thought fit to assign in his late confessions.

But was there not, in fact, something that lay far deeper than a mere professional prejudice?

Among many things in Scott's Diaries which cast strong light upon the previous part of his history, the reluctance which he confesses himself to have always felt towards the resumption of the proper appointed task, however willing, nay eager, to labour sedulously on something else, can hardly have escaped the reader's notice. We know how gallantly he combated it in the general, but these precious Diaries themselves are not the least pregnant proofs of the extent to which it very often prevailed—for an hour or two, at least, if not for the day.

I think this, if we were to go no further, might help us somewhat in understanding the neglect about superintending the Messrs. Ballantynes' ledgers and bill books, and, consequently, the rashness about buying land, building, and the like.

But to what are we to ascribe the origin of this reluctance towards accurate and minute investigation and transaction of business of various sorts, so important to himself, in a man possessing such extraordinary sagacity, and exercising it every day with such admirable regularity and precision, in the various capacities of the head of a family, the friend, the magistrate, the most distinguished citizen of Edinburgh, beyond all comparison the most distinguished member of society that figured in his time in his native kingdom?

The whole system of conceptions and aspirations, of which his early active life was the exponent, resolves itself into a romantic idealization of Scottish aristocracy. He desired to secure for his descendants (for himself he had very soon acquired something infinitely more flattering to self-love and vanity) a decent and honourable middle station—in a

scheme of life so constituted originally, and which his fancy pictured as capable of being so revived as to admit of the kindest personal contact between (almost) the peasant at the plough, and the magnate with revenues rivalling the monarch's. It was the patriarchal—the clan system that he thought of, one that never prevailed even in Scotland, within the historical period that is to say, except in the Highlands, and in his own dear Borderland. This system knew nothing of commerce, as little certainly of literature beyond the raid-ballad of the wandering harper,—

“High placed in hall—a welcome guest”

His filial reverence of imagination shrunk from marring the antique, if barbarous, simplicity. I suspect that at the highest elevation of his literary renown—when princes bowed to his name, and nations thrilled at it—he would have considered losing all that at a change of the wind as nothing, compared to parting with his place as the Cadet of Harden and Clansman of Buceleuch, who had, no matter by what means, reached such a position, that when a notion arose of embodying a Buceleuch Legion not a Scott in the Forest would have thought it otherwise than natural for *Abbotsford* to be one of the field-officers. I can, therefore, understand that he may have, from the very first, excited the dispensing power of imagination very liberally, in virtually absolving himself from dwelling on the wood of which his ladder was to be constructed. Enough was said in a preceding chapter of the obvious fact that the author of such a series of romances as his must have, to all intents and purposes, lived more than half his life in worlds purely fantastic. In one of the last obscure and faltering pages of his *Diary* he says, that if any one asked him how much of his thought was occupied by the novel then in hand, the answer would have been, that in one sense it never occupied him except when the amanuensis sat before him, but that in another it was never five minutes out of his head. Sneh, I have no doubt, the case had always been. But I must be excused from doubting whether, when the substantive fiction actually in process of manufacture was absent from his mind, the space was often or voluntarily occupied (no positive external duty interposing) upon the real practical worldly position and business of the Clerk of Session, of the Sheriff,—least of all of the printer or the bookseller.

The sum is, if I read him aright, that he was always willing, in his ruminative moods, to veil, if possible, from his own optics the kind of machinery by which alone he had found the means of attaining his darling objects. Having acquired a perhaps unparalleled power over the direction of scarcely paralleled faculties, he chose to exert his power in this manner. On no other supposition can I find his history intelligible,—I mean, of course, the great obvious and marking facts of his history, for I hope I have sufficiently disclaimed all pretention to a thorough-going analysis. He appears to have studiously escaped from whatever could have interfered with his own enjoyment—to have revelled in the fun results, and waved the wand of obliterating magic over all besides, and persisted so long, that (like the sorcerer he celebrates) he became the dupe of his own delusions.

It is thus that (not forgetting the subsidiary influence of professional prejudices) I am inclined, on the whole, to account for his initiation in the practice of mystery—a thing, at first sight, so alien from the frank, open, generous nature of a man, than whom none ever had or deserved to have more real friends.

The indulgence cost him very dear. It ruined his fortunes—but I can have no doubt that it did worse than that. I cannot suppose that a nature like his was fettered and shut up in this way without suffering very severely from the “cold obstruction.” There must have been a continual “insurrection” in his “state of man,” and, above all, I doubt not that what gave him the bitterest pain in the hour of his calamities was the feeling of compunction with which he then found himself obliged to stand before those with whom he had, through life, cultivated brotherlike friendship, convicted of having kept his heart closed to them on what they could not but suppose to have been the chief subjects of his thought and anxiety, in times when they withheld nothing from him. These, perhaps, were the “written troubles” that had been cut deepest into his brain. I think they were, and believe it the more, because it was never acknowledged.

If he had erred in the primary indulgence out of which this spring, he at least made noble atonement.

During the most energetic years of manhood he laboured with one prize in view; and he had just grasped it, as he fancied, securely, when all at once the vision was dissipated—he found himself naked and desolate as Job. How he nerved himself against the storm—how he felt and how he resisted it—how soberly, steadily, and resolutely he contemplated the possibility of yet, by redoubled exertions, in so far retrieving his fortunes as that no man should lose by having trusted those for whom he had been pledged—how well he kept his vow, and what price it cost him to do so,—all this the reader, I doubt not, appreciates fully. It seems to me that strength of character was never put to a severer test than when, for labours of love such as his had hitherto almost always been—the pleasant exertion of genius for the attainment of ends that owed all their dignity and beauty to a poetical fancy—there came to be substituted the iron pertinacity of daily and nightly toil in the discharge of a duty, which there was nothing but the sense of chivalrous honour to make stringent.

It is the fond indulgence of gay fancy in all the previous story that gives its true value and dignity to the voluntary agony of the sequel, when, indeed, he appears—

“Sapiens, sibi que imperiosus,
Quem neque pauperies, neque mors, neque vincula terrent,
Responsare cupidinibus, contemnere honores,
Fortis, et in seipso totus, teres atque rotundus,
Externi ne quid valeant per lare morari,
In quem manca ruit semper Fortuna.”

The attentive reader will not deny that every syllable of this proud ideal has been justified to the letter. But though he boasted of stoicism, his heroism was something far better than the stoic's, for it was not founded

on a haughty trampling down of all delicate and tender thoughts and feelings. He lays his heart bare in his Diary, and we there read in characters that will never die, how the sternest resolution of a philosopher may be at once quickened and adorned by the gentlest impulses of that spirit of love, which alone makes poetry the angel of life. This is the moment in which posterity will desire to fix his portraiture. It is then, truly, that—

“He sits, amongst men, like a descended god,
He hath a kind of honour sets him off
More than a mortal seeming.”

But the noble exhibition was not a fleeting one, it was not that a robust mind elevated itself by a fierce effort for the crisis of an hour. The martyrdom lasted with his days, and if it shortened them, let us remember his own immortal words—

“Sound, sound the claron, fill the fife,
To all the sensual world proclaim—
One crowded hour of glorious life
Is worth an age without a name.”

For the rest, I presume, it will be allowed that no human character which we have the opportunity of studying with equal minuteness, had fewer faults mixed up in its texture. The grand virtue of fortitude, the basis of all others, was never displayed in higher perfection than in him, and it was, as perhaps true courage always is, combined with an equally admirable spirit of kindness and humanity. His pride, if we must call it so, undebased by the least tincture of mere vanity, was intertwined with a most exquisite charity, and was not inconsistent with true humility. If ever the principle of kindness was incarnated in a mere man, it was in him, and real kindness can never be but modest. In the social relations of life, where men are most effectually tried, no spot can be detected in him. He was a patient, dutiful, reverent son, a generous, compassionate, tender husband, an honest, careful, and most affectionate father. Never was a more virtuous or a happier fireside than his. The influence of his mighty genius shadowed it imperceptibly, his calm good sense, and his angelic sweetness of heart and temper, regulated and softened a strict but paternal discipline. His children, as they grew up, understood by degrees the high privilege of their birth, but the profoundest sense of his greatness never disturbed their confidence in his goodness. The boyant play of his spirits made him sit young among the young, parent and son seemed to live in brotherhood together; and the chivalry of his imagination threw a certain air of courtly gallantry into his relations with his daughters, which gave a very peculiar grace to the fondness of their intercourse. Though there could not be a gentler mother than Lady Scott, on those delicate occasions most interesting to young ladies they always made their father the first confidant.

To the depth of his fraternal affection I ascribe mainly the only example of departure from the decorum of polished manners which a keen observer of him through life ever witnessed in him, or my own experience and information afford any trace of. Injuries done to himself

no man forgave more easily—more willingly repaid by benefits. But it was not so when he first and unexpectedly saw before him the noble person who, as he considered things at the time, had availed himself of his parliamentary privilege to cast a shade of insult upon the character of his next and best-loved brother.

But perhaps the most touching evidence of the lasting tenderness of his early domestic feelings was exhibited to his executors when they opened his repositories in search of his testament, the evening after his burial. On lifting up his desk we found arranged in careful order a series of little objects, which had obviously been so placed there that his eye might rest on them every morning before he began his tasks. These were the old-fashioned boxes that had garnished his mother's toilette when he, a sickly child, slept in her dressing-room—the silver taper-stand which the young advocate had bought for her with his first five-guinea fee—a row of small packets inscribed with her hand, and containing the hair of those of her offspring that had died before her—his father's snuff-box and etui-case—and more things of the like sort, recalling

“The old familiar faces.”

The same feeling was apparent in all the arrangement of his private apartment. Pictures of his father and mother were the only ones in his dressing-room. The clumsy antique cabinets that stood there, things of a very different class from the beautiful and costly productions in the public rooms below, had all belonged to the furniture of George's Square. Even his father's rickety washing-stand, with all its cramped appurtenances, though exceedingly unlike what a man of his very scrupulous habits would have selected in these days, kept its ground. The whole place seemed fitted up like a little chapel of the *lares*.

Such a son and parent could hardly fail in any of the other social relations. No man was a firmer or more undefatigable friend. I know not that he ever lost one, and a few, with whom, during the energetic middle stage of life, from political differences or other accidental circumstances, he lived less familiarly, had all gathered round him, and renewed the full warmth of early affection in his later days. There was enough to dignify the connexion in their eyes, but nothing to chill it on either side. The imagination that so completely mastered him when he chose to give her the rein was kept under most determined control when any of the positive obligations of active life came into question. A high and pure sense of duty presided over whatever he had to do as a citizen and a magistrate, and as a landlord he considered his estate as an extension of his hearth.

Of his political creed, the many who hold a different one will, of course, say that it was the natural fruit of his poetical devotion to the mere prejudice of antiquity; and I am quite willing to allow that this must have had a great share in the matter, and that he himself would have been as little ashamed of the word *prejudice* as of the word *antiquity*. Whenever Scotland could be considered as standing separate on any question from the rest of the empire he was not only apt, but eager to embrace the opportunity of again rehoisting, as it were, the old signal of national independence, and I sincerely believe that no circumstance in his literary career

gave him so much personal satisfaction as the success of Malachi Malagrowth's Epistles. He confesses, however, in his *Diary*, that he was aware how much it became him to summon calm reason to battle imaginative prepossessions on this score ; and I am not aware that they ever led him into any serious practical error. He delighted in letting his fancy run wild about ghosts and witches and horoscopes, but I venture to say, had he sat on the judicial bench a hundred years before he was born, no man would have been more certain to give juries sound direction in estimating the pretended evidence of supernatural occurrences of any sort ; and I believe, in like manner, that had any anti-English faction, civil or religious, sprung up in his own time in Scotland, he would have done more than any other living man could have hoped to do for putting it down. He was on all practical points a steady, conscientious Tory of the school of William Pitt, who, though an anti-revolutionist, was certainly anything but an anti-reformer. He rejected the innovations, in the midst of which he died, as a revival, under alarmingly authoritative auspices, of the doctrines which had endangered Britain in his youth, and desolated Europe throughout his prime of manhood. May the gloomy anticipations which hung over his closing years be unfulfilled ! But should they be so, let posterity remember that the warnings, and the resistance of his and other powerful intellects, were probably in that event the appointed means for averting a catastrophe in which, had England fallen, the whole civilized world must have been involved.

Sir Walter received a strictly religious education under the eye of parents, whose virtuous conduct was in unison with the principles they desired to instil into their children. From the great doctrines thus recommended, he appears never to have swerved, but he must be numbered among the many who have incurred considerable risk of doing so, in consequence of the rigidity with which Presbyterian heads of families, in Scotland, were used to enforce compliance with various relics of the puritanical observance. He took up, early in life, a repugnance to the mode in which public worship is conducted in the Scottish Establishment ; and adhered to the sister Church, whose system of government and discipline he believed to be the fairest copy of the primitive polity, and whose Litany and collects he revered as having been transmitted to us from the age immediately succeeding that of the Apostles. The few passages in his *Diaries* in which he alludes to his own religious feelings and practices, show clearly the sober, serene, and elevated frame of mind in which he habitually contemplated man's relations with his Maker ; the modesty with which he shrunk from indulging either the presumption of reason, or the extravagance of imagination, in the province of Faith, his humble reliance on the wisdom and mercy of God, and his firm belief that we are placed in this state of existence, not to speculate about another, but to prepare ourselves for it by active exertion of our intellectual faculties, and the constant cultivation of kindness and benevolence towards our fellow-men.

But his moral, political, and religious character has sufficiently impressed itself upon the great body of his writings. He is indeed one of the few great authors of modern Europe who stand acquitted of having

written a line that ought to have embittered the bed of death. His works teach the practical lessons of morality and Christianity in the most captivating form—unobtrusively and unaffectedly. And I think it is not refining too far to say, that in these works, as well as in his whole demeanour as a man of letters, we may trace the happy effects—(enough has already been said as to some less fortunate and agreeable ones)—of his having written throughout with a view to something beyond the acquisition of personal fame. Perhaps no great poet ever made his literature so completely ancillary to the objects and purposes of practical life. However his imagination might expatiate, it was sure to rest over his home. The sanctities of domestic love and social duty were never forgotten; and the same circumstance that most ennobles all his triumphs, affords also the best apology for his errors.

From the first, his possession of a strong and brilliant genius was acknowledged, and the extent of it seems to have been guessed by others, before he was able to persuade himself that he had claim to a place among the masters of literature. The ease with which he did everything deceived him; and he probably would never have done himself any measure of justice, even as compared with those of his own time, but for the fact, which no modesty could long veil, that whatever he did became immediately "*the fashion*,"—the object of all but universal imitation. Even as to this, he was often ready to surmise that the priority of his own movement might have been matter of accident; and certainly nothing can mark the humility of his mind more strikingly than the style in which he discusses, in his *Diary*, the pretensions of the pigmies that swarmed and fretted in the deep wake of his mighty vessel. To the really original writers among his contemporaries he did full justice; no differences of theory or taste had the least power to disturb his candour. In some cases he rejoiced in feeling and expressing a cordial admiration, where he was met by, at best, a cold and grudging reciprocity: and in others, his generosity was proof against not only the private belief, but the public exposure of envious malignity. Lord Byron might well say that Scott could be jealous of no one; but the immeasurable distance did not prevent many from being jealous of him.

His propensity to think too well of other men's works sprung, of course, mainly from his modesty and good nature; but the brilliancy of his imagination greatly sustained the delusion. It unconsciously gave precision to the trembling outline, and life and warmth to the rapid colours before him. This was especially the case as to romances and novels; the scenes and characters in them were invested with so much of the "*light within*," that he would close with regret volumes which, perhaps, no other person, except the diseased glutton of the circulating library, ever could get half through. Where colder critics saw only a schoolboy's hollowed turnip with its inch of tallow, he looked through the dazzling spray of his own fancy, and sometimes the clumsy toy seems to have swelled almost into "*the majesty of buried Denmark*."

These servile imitators are already forgotten, or will soon be so; but it is to be hoped that the spirit which breathes through his works may continue to act on our literature, and consequently on the character and

manners of men The race that grew up under the influence of that intellect can hardly be expected to appreciate fully their own obligations to it: and yet if we consider what were the tendencies of the minds and works that, but for his, must have been unrivalled in the power and opportunity to mould young ideas, we may picture to ourselves in some measure the magnitude of the debt we owe to a perpetual succession, through thirty years, of publications unapproached in charm, and all instilling a high and healthy code; a bracing, invigorating spirit; a contempt of mean passions, whether vindictive or voluptuous; humane charity, as distinct from moral laxity as from unsympathizing austerity; sagacity too deep for cynicism, and tenderness never degenerating into sentimentality animated throughout in thought, opinion, feeling, and style, by one and the same pure energetic principle—a pith and savour of manhood; appealing to whatever is good and loyal in our natures, and rebuking whatever is low and selfish

Had Sir Walter never taken a direct part in politics as a writer, the visible bias of his mind on such subjects must have had a great influence; nay, the mere fact that such a man belonged to a particular side would have been a very important weight in the balance. His services, direct and indirect, towards repressing the revolutionary propensities of his age were vast—far beyond the comprehension of vulgar politicians.

On the whole I have no doubt that, the more the details of his personal history are revealed and studied, the more powerfully will that be found to inculcate the same great lessons with his works. Where else shall we be taught better how prosperity may be extended by beneficence, and adversity confronted by exertion? Where can we see the “follies of the wise” more strikingly rebuked, and a character more beautifully purified and exalted in the passage through affliction to death? I have lingered so long over the details that I have, perhaps, become, even from that circumstance alone, less qualified than more rapid surveyors may be to seize the effect in the mass. But who does not feel that there is something very invigorating as well as elevating in the contemplation? His character seems to belong to some older and stronger period than ours, and, indeed, I cannot help likening it to the architectural fabrics of other ages, which he most delighted in, where there is such a congregation of imagery and tracery, such endless indulgence of whim and fancy, the sublime blending here with the beautiful, and there contrasted with the grotesque,—half, perhaps, seen in the clear daylight, and half by rays tinged with the blazoned forms of the past—that one may be apt to get bewildered among the variety of particular impressions, and not feel either the unity of the grand design, or the height and solidness of the structure, until the door has been closed upon the labyrinth of aisles and shrines, and you survey it from a distance, but still within its shadow.

And yet as, with whatever admiration his friends could not but regard him constantly when among them, the prevailing feeling was still love and affection, so is it now, and so must ever it be, as to his memory. It is not the privilege of every reader to have partaken in the friendship of A GREAT AND GOOD MAN, but those who have not may be assured, that the sentiment, which the near homely contemplation of such a being inspires, is a thing entirely by itself,—

—"Not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate"

And now to conclude—In the year 1832, France and Germany, as well as Britain, had to mourn over their brightest intellects. Goethe shortly preceded Scott, and Cuvier followed him, and with these mighty lights were extinguished many others of no common order—among the rest Crabbe and Mackintosh.

Many of those who had been intimately connected with Scott in various ways soon also followed him. James Ballantyne was already on his death-bed when he heard of his great friend and patron's death. The foreman of the printing-house, a decent and faithful man, who had known all their secrets, and done his best for their service, both in prosperous and adverse times, by name M'Corkindale, began to droop and pine, and died too in a few months. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, must also be mentioned. He died on the 21st of November, 1835, but it had been better for his fame had his end been of earlier date, for he did not follow his best benefactor until he had insulted his dust. Lastly, I observe, as this sheet is passing through the press, the death of the Rev George Thomson—the happy "Domine Thomson" of the happy days of Abbotsford. He died at Edinburgh on the 8th of January, 1838.

Miss Anne Scott received at Christmas, 1832, a grant of £200 per annum from the privy purse of King William IV. But her name did not long burden the pension list. Her constitution had been miserably shattered in the course of her long and painful attendance, first on her mother's illness, and then on her father's, and perhaps reverse of fortune, and disappointments of various sorts connected with that, had also heavy effect. From the day of Sir Walter's death, the strong stimulus of duty being lost, she too often looked and spoke like one

"Taking the measure of an unmade grave."

After a brief interval of disordered health, she contracted a brain fever which carried her off abruptly. She died in my house in the Regent's Park on the 25th June, 1833, and her remains are placed in the New Cemetery in the Harrow Road.

The adjoining grave holds those of her nephew John Hugh Lockhart, who died 15th December, 1831, and also those of my wife Sophia, who expired after a long illness, which she bore with all possible meekness and fortitude, on the 17th of May, 1837. The clergyman who read the funeral service over her was her father's friend, and hers, and mine, the Rev Henry Hart Milman, one of the Prebendaries of Westminster, and a little incident which he happened to observe during the prayers suggested to him some verses, which he transmitted to me the morning after, and which the reader will not, I believe, consider altogether misplaced in the last page of these memoirs of her father.

STANZAS.

May 22, 1837

"Over that solemn pageant mute and dark,
Where in the grave we laid to rest
Heaven's latest, not least welcome guest,
What didst thou on the wing, thou jocund lark?
Hovering in unrebuked glee,
And carolling above that mournful company!

"O thou light loving and melodious bird,
At every sad and solemn fall
Of mine own voice, each interval
In the soul-elevating prayer, I heard
Thy quivering descant full and clear—
Discord not inharmonious to the ear!

"We laid her there, the Minstrel's darling child.
Seem'd it then meet that, borne away
From the close city's dubious day,
Her dirge should be thy native woodnote wild,
Nursed upon nature's lap, her sleep
Should be where birds may sing, and dewy flowerets weep!

"Ascendest thou, air-wandering messenger!
Above us slowly lingering yet,
To bear our deep, our mute regret,
To waft upon thy faithful wing to her
The husband's fondest last farewell,
Love's final parting pang, the unspoke, the unspeakable!

"Or didst thou rather chide with thy blithe voice
Our selfish grief that would delay
Her passage to a brighter day,
Bidding us mourn no longer, but rejoice
That it hath heavenward flown like thee,
That spirit from this cold world of sin and sorrow free!

"I watched thee, lessening, lessening to the sight,
Still faint and fainter winnowing,
The sunshine with thy dwindling wing,
A speck, a movement in the ruffled light,
Till thou wert melted in the sky,
An undistinguished part of the bright infinity.

"Meet emblem of that lightsome spirit thou!
That still wherever it might come,
Shed sunshine o'er that happy home.
Her task of kindness and gladness now
Absolved, with the element above
Hath mingled, and become pure light, pure joy, pure love!"

There remain, therefore, of Sir Walter's race only his two sons, Walter, his successor in the baronetcy, Major in the 15th Regiment of Hussars,* and Charles, a clerk in the office of her Majesty's Secretary of State for

* He died at sea near the Cape of Good Hope, February 8th, 1846.

Foreign Affairs;* with two children, left by their sister Sophia, a boy and a girl.†

Shortly after Sir Walter's death, his sons and myself, as his executors, endeavoured to make such arrangements as were within our power for completing the great object of his own wishes and fatal exertions. We found the remaining principal sum of the Ballantyne debt to be about £54,000. £22,000 had been insured upon his life; there were some monies in the hands of the Trustees, and Mr Cadell very handsomely offered to advance to us the balance, about £30,000, that we might without further delay settle with the body of creditors. This was effected accordingly on the 2nd of February, 1833; Mr Cadell accepting as his only security the right to the profits accruing from Sir Walter's copyright property and literary remains, until such time as this new and consolidated obligation should be discharged.

Besides his commercial debt Sir Walter left also one of £10,000, contracted by himself as an individual when struggling to support Constable in December, 1825, and secured by mortgage on the lands of Abbotsford. And lastly, the library and museum, presented to him in free gift by his creditors in December, 1830, were bequeathed to his eldest son, with a burden to the extent of £5,000, which sum he designed to be divided between his younger children, as already explained in an extract from his Diary. His will provided that the produce of his literary property in case of its proving sufficient to wipe out the remaining debt of Messrs Ballantyne, should then be applied to the extinction of these mortgages, and thereafter, should this also be accomplished, divided equally among his surviving family.

Various meetings were held soon after his death with a view to the erection of monuments to his memory, and the records of these meetings and their results, are adorned by many of the noblest and most distinguished names both of England and of Scotland. In London, the Lord Bishop of Exeter, Sir Robert Peel, and Sir John Malcolm took a prominent part as speakers. In Edinburgh, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Marquis of Lothian, the Earl of Dalhousie, the Earl of Roseberry, Lord Jeffrey (then Lord-Advocate for Scotland), and Professor Wilson.

In Glasgow the subscription amounted to about £1,200, and a pillar is now rising in the chief square of that city, which had been previously adorned with statues of its own most illustrious citizens, Sir John Moore and James Watt.

The subscription for a monument at Edinburgh reached the sum of £6,000; but the committee have not as yet made their selection from the plans submitted to them.

* He died before his brother at Teheran, 1841.—*Editor.*

† Neither of Scott's sons left children. Charles died unmarried. The two children of his eldest daughter Sophia (Mrs. Lockhart), were WALTER SCOTT LOCKHART who succeeded his uncles took the name of Scott, and CHARLOTTE HARRIET JANE who married James Robert Hope, Esq., second son of General the Honourable Sir Alexander Hope. The son Walter Scott Lockhart Scott, died January 10, 1853. Mrs. Hope succeeded to the estate of Abbotsford on her brother's death, and with her husband took the name of Scott in addition to Hope. She died in 1858 leaving three children, two of whom died infants; the eldest "Mary Monica," alone surviving of Scott's great grandchildren.

